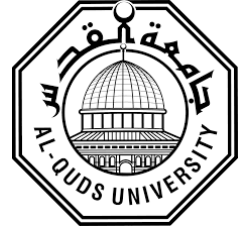


Deanship of Graduate Studies

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US Foreign Policy towards Palestine After 9/11

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US Foreign Policy towards Palestine After 9/11

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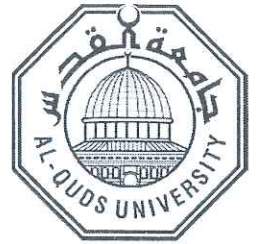
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Thesis Approval

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DECLARATION

I Certify that this thesis submitted for the degree of Master, is the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this study (or any part of the same) has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Signed..........

Wi'am Adnan Mohammed Hammash

Date: 2018/12/19

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents for their love, care, endless support, encouragement and sacrifices.

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who helped me to make my thesis work a success. I express my sincere and whole hearted thanks, to my thesis supervisor **Dr. Dan Kryder** for his guidance, patience and motivation. His continuous support and insightful comments helped me to present this work in the right perspective. Without his guidance and persistent help, this accomplishment would not have been possible.

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Finally, I would like to thank every individual who have been a source of encouragement and support and helped me to complete my thesis work successfully.

ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11 during the presidency of President George W. Bush. This thesis employs the historical, descriptive and analytical approaches to understand deeply US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11. It shows the real impact of the 9/11 attacks on the foreign policy towards Palestine, and the US initiatives to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through the Bush administration's decision to recognize the Palestinian state, for the first time in US history. It introduces the theoretical frameworks that reflect US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11, including realism, and neo-conservatism. It explores the usefulness of adopting a realist perspective to explain the Bush administration's decision. The thesis focuses on the American interference in Palestinian domestic political policy through pressuring the Palestinians to take certain reforms, remove President Yasser Arafat, and denounce terrorism, as both the US and Israel regard the resistance of the Israeli occupation as terrorism. These were pre-conditions if the Palestinians wanted to achieve their independent state. This thesis focuses on the main determinants both domestic and international that combine to shape US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11. It focuses on how foreign policy decisions are being made in the US, and by whom. The thesis ends with the result that the US was never serious about resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but managing the conflict to safeguard American national interests in the Middle East, including the security of Israel. By doing so, the US succeeded in giving Israel enough time to impose the facts on the ground and thus maintaining the status-quo of no negotiations in the Occupied Territories. Thus, the US was never an honest and neutral broker between Palestinians and Israelis.

السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية تجاه فلسطين بعد أحداث الحادي عشر من سبتمبر

إعداد:

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ملخص:

ركزت هذه الرسالة على السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية تجاه فلسطين بعد أحداث الحادي عشر من سبتمبر خلال الفترة الرئاسية للرئيس جورج بوش الابن. توظف هذه الرسالة الطرق التاريخية، والوصفية والتحليلية لفهم السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية بعمق تجاه فلسطين بعد أحداث الحادي عشر من سبتمبر. تظهر التأثير الحقيقي لهجمات 11 سبتمبر على السياسة الخارجية تجاه فلسطين، والمبادرات الأمريكية لحل النزاع الفلسطيني الإسرائيلي من خلال قرار إدارة بوش الاعتراف بالدولة الفلسطينية، لأول مرة في تاريخ الولايات المتحدة. وهي تقدم الأطر النظرية التي تعكس السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة تجاه فلسطين بعد 11 سبتمبر، بما في ذلك الواقعية، والمحافظة الجديدة. إنها تستكشف فائدة تبني منظور واقعي لتفسير قرار إدارة بوش. تركز الرسالة على التدخل الأمريكي في السياسة السياسية الفلسطينية الداخلية من خلال الضغط على الفلسطينيين لإجراء إصلاحات معينة، وإزالة الرئيس ياسر عرفات، وإدانة الإرهاب، حيث تعتبر كل من الولايات المتحدة وإسرائيل مقاومة الاحتلال الإسرائيلي إرهاباً. كانت هذه شروط مسبقة إذا أراد الفلسطينيون تحقيق دولتهم المستقلة. تركز هذه الرسالة على المحددات الرئيسية المحلية والدولية التي تتصافر لتشكيل السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية تجاه فلسطين بعد 11 سبتمبر. وتركز على كيفية اتخاذ قرارات السياسة الخارجية في الولايات المتحدة، وعلى يد من. تنتهي الأطروحة بنتيجة أن الولايات المتحدة لم تكن جادة أبداً في حل النزاع الفلسطيني الإسرائيلي، ولكن إدارة الصراع لحماية المصالح الوطنية الأمريكية في الشرق الأوسط، بما في ذلك أمن إسرائيل. من خلال القيام بذلك، نجحت الولايات المتحدة في منح إسرائيل الوقت الكافي

لفرض الحقائق على الأرض ، وبالتالي الحفاظ على الوضع الراهن لعدم إجراء أي مفاوضات في الأراضي المحتلة. وهكذا ، لم تكن الولايات المتحدة أبدا وسيطا نزيها ومحايذا بين الفلسطينيين والإسرائيليين.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

On the morning of September 11, 2001 four commercial jets, hijacked by members of Al Qaeda the terrorist group, crashed into the World Trade Center towers in New York, the Pentagon in Washington DC, and rural Pennsylvania (Grunwald, 2001). This attack was as surprise for the United States as was the Pearl Harbor attack (Powell, 2011). Both attacks were conducted by foreign actors and both were shockingly effective. Both attacks killed almost 3000 American people (Courtney, 2009). Each attack led to an American foreign policy decision to engage in a sustained and costly global war. It is reasonable therefore to ask about the effects of such traumatic attacks on policies involving the Middle East and more specifically Palestine, especially in the latter case given that the attackers were Arabic speakers.

US intervention in the Middle East was not limited to a post-9/11 expansion. After World War II, the US had multiple national interests in the region, including the security of Israel (Schmaglowski, 2007). American presidents and congresses have always been pro-Israel to varying degrees and they consider Israel's security when they make their foreign policy for the Middle East (Zanotti, 2016). Convictional wisdom argues that 9/11 changed everything, never to be the same (Litwak, 2002). However, in order to examine the validity of this perspective, we need first to understand the definition of American foreign policy, its features, and who determine it.

Foreign policy is the means by which any state safeguards its national interests within the international system. According to Hill (2003), foreign policy can be defined as purposive action conducted by a state to safeguard its national interests (Hill, 2003). The United States is as other states within an anarchic international system and uses its foreign policy to stabilize and safeguard its national interests given this unruly context. Over the course of the twentieth century, officials changed American foreign policy from isolationism to interventionism to safeguard such interests (BELLILI, 2015). Thus, US foreign policy pragmatically attempts to serve American national interests (Hastedt, 2014). Change in strategy is determined by different domestic actors. According to Radu (2010) and Trice (1978), US foreign policy is defined by the president, Congress, and the interest groups. This research will explore the usefulness of adopting a realist perspective to explain US foreign policy, with a focus on the post 9/11 period and the Bush administration's decision to recognize the Palestinian state.

After the end of World War II, the US and the Soviet Union emerged as hegemonic powers in the world. The Middle East became a strategic region for both powers (Honey & Barry, 2000). During the Cold War, Soviet expansion in the Middle East constituted a threat to American national interests in the region, including secure access to oil, the protection of pro-Western monarchies in the Persian Gulf, and the Security of Israel (ibid). Thus, the "policy of containment" was an American response to Soviet expansion (Hassassian, 1997). Post-Cold War, the U.S became the only hegemonic power in the Middle East, and worked to prevent the emergence of Iraq as a new regional power (Prifti, 2017). The US accused Iraq of having "weapons of mass destruction," and resorted to the UN Security Council to impose sanctions on Iraq on August 6, 1990 (Honey & Barry, 2000, 241). After 9/11, the US declared a "War on Terror" to maximize its presence in the Middle East as the only regional hegemon (Prifti, 2017).

As a tactic in this grand strategy, the US sought to promote democracy in the region, through using “preemptive actions,” “preventive war,” and “unilateralism.”

Since the end of World War II, the security of Israel has been a priority for the US at the expense of Palestinians. All US presidents, republican or democratic, take into consideration Israel’s security when they make their foreign policy in the Middle East (Zanotti, 2016). President Harry Truman accepted the UN Partition Plan of Palestine in 1947, and recognized Israel as a state in 1948 (Radosh, 2010). The recognition of Israeli statehood was a major action with longstanding effects. President John Kennedy did not recognize Palestinians as national populace with rights, and he had promoted relations with Israel (Ibid). President Lyndon Johnson required Israel to withdraw from the OPT only in return for peace with the Arabs (Tristam, 2017). President Richard Nixon recognized UN resolution 242, but he failed to force Israel to withdraw from the Occupied Palestinian Territories (Schmaglowski, 2007). President Jimmy Carter mediated the Camp David Accords in 1978 between Israel and Egypt, and he much later openly criticized Israel for imposing the apartheid system on Palestinians (Carter, 2006). President Ronald Reagan supported the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements in the OPT. (Tristam, 2017). President George H. W. Bush supported negotiations between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel to solve the conflict, but he failed to conduct these negotiations. Bush threatened Israel with the stopping of loans until it agreed to participate in the Madrid conference in 1991 (Devine, 2008). President Bill Clinton sponsored the Oslo Accords in 1993, but he failed to promote peace between the two sides. President George W. Bush considered President Yasser Arafat as a terrorist, and he put fighting terrorism as a pre-condition to achieve an independent Palestinian statehood. (Halabi, 2016). President Barack Obama supported the two-state solution, and he promised to end the conflict. However, he failed to

fulfill his promises (Effarah, 2013). President Donald Trump officially recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in a historic revolution that ended the role of the US as a mediator in the peace process between Palestinians and Israelis. In November 2017, Trump refused to renew the license of the PLO office in Washington (Hamdi, 2018). Moreover, on September 10, 2018 Trump announced closure of PLO office.

1.2. Significance of the Study

Most research done to date has focused on US foreign policy towards the Middle East after 9/11, and it has shown that US foreign policy either changed or unchanged. However, this thesis will focus on Palestine, and will ask precisely how, if at all, US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11 changed. This study will cover the administration of President George W. Bush, and will shed light on pre-9/11 administrations to examine change and continuity towards Palestine after 9/11. This study hopes to provide Palestinian society and researchers who are interested in the US foreign policy with clear information and knowledge about the influence of the US as a mediator in the peace-process between Palestinians and Israelis. In addition, this study seeks to define the roles of the president, Congress, and the Israeli lobby in determining the US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11. Further, this thesis will be based on the theoretical framework of realism, as it competes with liberalism, and neo-conservatism to best explain US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11.

1.3. Definition of the Problem

Israel is a strategic ally for the United States in the Middle East. They shared fundamental ideologies, and the security of Israel represents an important American national interest.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

- Study and examine US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11.
- Examine how US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11 changed if at all.
- Examine the ability of the US to act as a neutral mediator in the peace-process between Palestinians and Israelis.

1.5. Research Questions

In order to understand the US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11 in terms of change or continuity, this thesis asks:

- To what extent and in which ways has the US foreign policy been changed towards Palestine after 9/11?
- Is the US an unbiased mediator in the Peace-Process between Palestinians and Israelis after 9/11?

The study proposes as a hypothesis that US foreign policy towards Palestine results from a complex process driven by national interests and determined by different international

and domestic actors. Due to this complexity, some aspects of US foreign policy towards Palestine changed and others remain unchanged after 9/11.

1.6. Methodology

This research will be qualitative, based on descriptive, historical and analytical methodology. The evidence collected will be written primary and secondary sources such as academic books, scholarly articles, news articles, as well as documents from foreign policy agencies and speeches of US presidents.

1.7. Theoretical Background

According to Hill (2003) foreign policy is defined as a site for political actions conducted by a state to safeguard its national interests. Thus, the US is similar to all countries around the globe in terms of this foreign policy definition. These political actions are produced by many domestic actors, including the president, Congress, and the interest groups (Milner & Tingley, 2015). US foreign policy moved from isolationism to interventionism (Levin, 2011). This transition reflects the fact that US foreign policy can change in important ways to serve its national interests.

1.7.1. US Foreign Policy as a Revolutionary Policy after 9/11

This section provides some theoretical background of two groups of scholars: those who argue that a revolution happened in US foreign policy toward the Middle East and Palestine after

9/11, and those who argue that a pre-existing policy continue to influence the US foreign policy toward the Middle East and Palestine after 9/11.

1.7.1.1. From Crises to Change

American foreign policy while remarkably stable, can change due to crisis. Halabi (2016) emphasizes that after each major crisis, the US changes its foreign policy in a way that creates stability and serves American national interests. Thus, US policy-makers changed previous policies and replaced them with new ones to solve new problems (Halabi, 2016). Similarly, Prifti (2017) asserts that the Bush Doctrine was unique, and departed from previous doctrines because the US moved from being peace-loving to war-loving. Similarly, Khan (2013) argues that 9/11 made a radical shift and major changes in the US foreign policy towards the Middle East and Palestine, through giving examples. For example, before 9/11, the US was busy protecting its national interests in the Middle East, including oil. This protection was through supporting authoritarian friends and allies of Washington in the Persian Gulf. On the other hand, Khan (2013) emphasizes that after 9/11, the US decided to promote democracy, and change authoritarian regimes in the Middle East to serve American national interests. Thus, the only concern for the US is protecting its national interests in the Middle East due to the circumstances (Khan, 2013).

According to Rynhold (2015) US support for Israel increased after 9/11 because Israel had the right to defend itself against the Palestinian terror. In addition, the US supported the removal of Palestinian president Yasser Arafat because he was considered as a terrorist. Accordingly, Miller (2006) emphasizes that after 9/11, promoting democracy in Palestine

became a pre-condition to establish the Palestinian state. Before 9/11, the US supported the creation of an independent Palestinian state, and supported the Mitchell Report which was important to end the conflict and end illegal Israeli settlements (Miller, 2006). Thus, the US shifted from focusing on Israeli occupation to focus on internal Palestinian issues. While the US was trying to promote democracy in the Middle East, Abrams (2017) emphasizes that the US believes that democracy promotion is a dangerous luxury in the Middle East, because the so-called “democratic parties” are only democratic by name with no actions.

1.7.2. US Foreign Policy as a Pre-Existing Policy after 9/11

1.7.2.1. Continuation of Imperialism

Others argue that the 9/11 attacks led to a continuation in American imperialist foreign policy. According to Porter (2006); Malley-Morrison et al. (2012), the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 reflects a continuation of imperial American foreign policy. Malley-Morrison et al. (2012) proves this point through citing the idea of Porter (2006) about “Ideological Certainty”; a belief dating from the 19th century that the US is unique and superior, and thus destined by God to expand its territory to fight evil and promote democracy. Similarly, Farwell (2006); Madden (2008), asserts that American imperialism reemerged during and after the Cold War. The US was able to build a new world order that served its national interests due to its military power. As a result, the US became a world police man. Vast military supremacy legitimized US regional expenditure and intervention in the Middle East, including the invasion of Iraq in 1991 and in 2003 to serve American national interests (Farwell, 2006; Madden, 2008).

The Bush doctrine reflects continuity in American foreign policy. According to Tsui (2016), the Bush doctrine was not a revolutionary doctrine because the preemptive use of military forces against terrorism, regime change, and the promotion of democracy in the Middle East were considered already by former American presidents before 9/11. Similarly, Yonah & Kraft (2008) emphasizes that countering terrorism was traced from previous American administrations; in the 1998's and the 1990's, President Reagan and President Clinton emphasized on the threat of terrorism and the necessity to utilize military force in countering terrorism conducted by non-state actors and supported by state actors. Similarly, Tsui (2012) asserts that the Bush doctrine reflects continuity in the American-led War on Terror.

Yonah & Kraft, 2008 and Prifti, 2017 argue that the Bush administration was similar to the administrations of Reagan and Clinton in terms of the war on international terrorism conducted by non-state actors and supported by state-actors. Further, US foreign policy after 9/11 did not change from that of pre-9/11 in terms of maintaining US hegemony and using unilateralism. That is because America's global status as the only hegemon in the region did not change, and thus its objectives and strategies did not change as in turn (Prifti, 2017).

1.8. Study Limitations

This study will be limited to Palestine, and to the George W. Bush's administration in the aftermath of 9/11.

1.9. Thesis Outline

The main purpose of this thesis was to examine how US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11 changed if at all. This thesis will explore the usefulness of adopting a realist perspective to explain US foreign policy, with a focus on the impact of 9/11 on the Bush administration's decision to recognize the Palestinian state. **Chapter Two** will include the theoretical background that aims to summarize previous research on US foreign policy towards the Middle East and Palestine before and after 9/11. Finally, this chapter will introduce the theoretical frameworks that reflect US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11, including realism, and neo-conservatism. **Chapter Three** will define the main determinants of US foreign policy and discuss the decision making process towards Palestine before 9/11, how foreign policy decisions are being made in the US, and by whom. It will provide a clear understanding of the main factors that affect the decision making process towards Palestine before 9/11, and explain the justifications of decisions taken by policy-makers. **Chapter Four** will define the main determinants of US foreign policy and discuss the decision making process towards Palestine after 9/11, how foreign policy decisions are being made in the US, and by whom. It will provide a clear understanding of the main factors that affect the decision making process towards Palestine after 9/11, and explain the justifications of decisions taken by policy-makers. **Chapter Five** will analyze the reasons behind the Bush administration's decision to offer recognition to an independent Palestinian state. It will discuss under what conditions would a strategic and "realist" American foreign policy elite make such a substantial change in policy that on its surface appears so favorable to Palestinians.

CHAPTER TWO:

THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The purpose of this chapter is to present a theoretical framework useful for understanding and explaining the US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11. This theoretical framework, based on the literature reviewed, should both explain the historical context of US foreign policy towards Palestine, and explain relevant international relations theory. This chapter will be divided into three parts: an overview of international relations theories, an overview of the historical roots of US foreign policy towards Palestine, and finally a description of the implementation of US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11 within a theoretical framework.

2.1. Theories of International Relations

Theories of International Relations are important because they promise to explain how the world works. These theories allow us to understand the complexity of world politics and simplify it through studying the behavior of states and the relations between them under certain conditions and circumstances, including anarchy, as they seek to serve their national interests within the international system (Lawson, 2013). This section summarizes four theories.

Realism

For realism, internationally-oriented human beings are evil and selfish, and are driven by their national interests (McGlinchey, 2017). Realists consider the world in anarchy made of states with no world government. States act rationally and compete with each other to survive and safeguard their national interests in a dangerous world (Burchill, 2005). For realism, the state is the main actor and thus power and national security are its main goals (Nicholson, 2002). States should use their unique military and economic powers to reshape the world order (Slaughter, 2011). Realism also has a contemporary version called Neo-Realism, which emphasizes that human nature is not the reason behind states' desire for power and dominance, but the absence of world government (Baylis, 2017). Further, neo-realists emphasize that states do their best to maximize their power against being threatened or attacked (Lawson, 2013).

There are important differences between neo-realists. On one hand, defensive realists like Kenneth Waltz (1979) emphasize that states should not always try to maximize their power to achieve security and survival because this can affect them negatively (Mearsheimer, 2007). Further, Waltz emphasizes that the balance of power and cooperation between major states are the best ways to achieve security and survival for all (Mearsheimer, 2007). In addition, Waltz emphasizes that the foreign policy of a state does not affect the international system (Prifti, 2017). On the other hand, offensive realists like John Mearsheimer (2001) emphasize that states should maximize their power and should pursue hegemony to achieve security and survival (Mearsheimer, 2007). Thus, military capability is the most important priority for great powers because it determines their place in the international system. Great powers are able to affect the international system and determine how it should operate according to their national interests, actions, and decisions. Mearsheimer emphasizes that since nations operate within an anarchic

system so states are rational actors and do their best to maximize their power against being threatened or attacked (ibid). Offensive realists believe that great powers are rational actors which prioritize their national interests, including security and survival over other needs and objectives (ibid).

Liberalism

McGlinchey (2017) argues that within a liberal framework, human beings are fundamentally good. (McGlinchey, 2017). Liberals emphasize that while war is an expected result, it should be the last option for states (Watson, 2012). Thus, shared liberal values between states, including cooperation and multilateralism, international law, free trade, democracy and human rights, should lead to peace rather than violence and war. Liberals emphasize that democratic states do not often fight each other, but they fight non-democratic states to maintain peace and security, according to democratic peace theory (Lyne, 1994). Liberalism emphasizes that international institutions such as the League of Nations and the United Nations are key actors in international relations because they collect multiple states, and can often prevent states from being selfish and thus encourage cooperation toward the common good (Walt, 1998). Liberalism has two contemporary approaches, Neo-Liberalism or Neo-Liberal Institutionalism, and Liberal Internationalism.

Neo-Liberalism believes that democracy, interdependence, relatively free markets, international law, and international organizations can lead to lasting peace and security through institutions like the United Nations (Khanna, 2016). For neo-liberalism, states are the main actors, but not the only ones since other actors, include non-state actors (Lasan, 2012). Lawson

(2013) emphasizes that for neo-liberals, the world is anarchy, and states are rational and their behaviors are driven by their national interests. Thus, under this anarchy system, states should cooperate to survive (Lawson, 2013).

Hoffmann (1995) argues that Liberal Internationalism aims to spread democracy all around the world to maintain peace, security, and stability (Hoffmann, 1995, 159). This means that liberal internationalism is an approach to international relations that cares about promoting democracy and human rights globally. Further, liberal internationalism considers that humanitarian intervention by all means, including military force, sometimes is necessary for the good of humanity (Hehir, 2013).

Constructivism

Walt (1998) argues that for constructivism, international politics or international relations are shaped by the social construction of states, as opposed to their behaviors, rational choices, and selfish interests (Walt, 1998, 40). Ideas, norms, and identities have significantly influence states' interests and interactions with each other. Further, Slaughter (2011) states that for constructivists, military force, free trade and international institutions are shaped by social identities, beliefs and ideologies (Slaughter, 2011). Thus, international relations are constructed by social groups (Lawson, 2013).

Conservatism

For conservatism, power is an important national interest that states seek (Rathbun, 2008, 273). Conservatives thus consider relations between states immoral, because they are driven by power. Further, Rizer (2000) argues that for conservatives, war is unavoidable because it is an important instrument for serving national interests (Rizer, 2000). Conservatism has an important contemporary approach, Neo-Conservatism.

Middup (2006) emphasizes that for neoconservatives, America's military, political and economic power is a force for good in the world (Middup, 2006). Neo-conservatism aims to increase US hegemony in the Middle East (Davis, 2008). Neoconservatives are strong supporters of Israel, and dubious about Arab intentions (Steinfels, 2013). For neo-conservatives, national interests are material, including military force. And neo-conservatives emphasize on the role of power in international relations (Rathbun, 2008). Further, neo-conservatives consider international institutions as dangerous (ibid). Further, Worley (2012) argues that neo-conservatism believes in the use of force to spread democracy across the globe (Worley, 2012). Neo-Conservatives are against multilateralism and the international institutions, and favor unilateralism (Rathbun, 2008). In addition, neo-conservatives are nationalists and they call for national pride and greatness. They believe in the greatness of the nation (ibid). Further, neo-conservatives believe that the national interests of the state are not different than that of the international community. Thus, state hegemony is good for the world (ibid).

2.2. Historical Roots of US Foreign Policy towards Palestine

In the beginning of the 20th century, the international system was multipolar between great powers, including the United States. The US tended to see itself as unique and exceptional, and that it had a mission from God to serve humanity through democracy and moral values. Thus, it had practiced a policy of isolationism apart from other nations so it did not have an effective role in the Middle East. America's "God mission" shaped US foreign policy towards Palestine. As Christion (2001) said: "US sights fastened on Palestine – the Holy Land, the land of the Bible – as the place where Christianity and the ancient kingdom of Israel must be restored and repossessed from Muslim intruders (Christion, 2001, 19). The significance of the holy land for Western Christians, made Arabs and especially Palestinians as aliens in their own land. The American interest in Palestine was within an orientalist framework in which Palestine was a biblical and a holy land, to be reclaimed by Christians and Jews. Thus indigenous Palestinian Arabs were either non-existent, or barbarians, violent and unimportant (Christison, 2001). US foreign policy was therefore always biased in favor of Israel, and against Palestinians, because it has always been rooted in a Christian worldview.

After World War I, Woodrow Wilson was the first American president to make a political decision on Palestine and support Zionism publically. His faith and beliefs influenced his policies. Christison (2001) argues that Wilson considered the Jewish return to Palestine as a fulfillment of biblical prophecies, and compatible with America's God mission (Christison, 2001). Azar (2011) emphasizes that Wilson's biblical beliefs led him to support Britain's 1917 Balfour Declaration which promised to establish a Jewish home land in Palestine, and denied the existence of the Palestinian people, in spite of the King-Crane Commission recommendations which said that the Zionist program would be a gross violation of the Palestinian people's right

to self-determination (Azar, 2011). Thus, Wilson extended concept of self-determination to many people, but denied its applicability to many indigenous populations controlled by colonial powers, including the Palestinians.

Wilson's successors, including Franklin Roosevelt followed the same foreign policy in ignoring the existence of Palestinians in Palestine. Al Wadiyyeh (2009) argues that the period between the two World Wars from 1917 to 1945 was a period of American support for Zionism, not an effective commitment; the US took over Britain's role in supporting Zionism (Al Wadiyyeh, 2009). The US continued to see Palestine as a biblical land that is more appropriate for Jews than Arabs. Further, Hahn (2006) argues that Americans looked down on Muslims and Arabs and predicted that Jews would make Palestine prosper (Hahn, 2006). Zionist pressure was strong enough to gain American sympathy for Jews and thus helped drive US foreign policy and American public opinion toward favoring the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine to save Jews from the Holocaust. America's leaders were completely ignorant about the Palestinian situation. Christison (1997) also argues that Americans understood the Arab-Israeli conflict from a Zionist perspective (Christison, 1997).

The Cold War Era: The Evolution of American Hegemony

After the end of World War II, the US emerged as a hegemonic power beside the Soviet Union as the international system became a bipolar system. The strategic importance and oil resources of the Middle East attracted both powers and thus became one of the major theaters of the Cold War (Sayigh, 1997). Both superpowers competed to control the Middle East's resources. During the Cold War, the US had many national interests in the Middle East,

including ensuring US access to oil resources, containing Soviet expansion, and ensuring the security of Israel (Schmaglowski, 2007).

The US considered Israel its close strategic ally and its tool in protecting American national interests in the region, including containing Soviet expansion. Therefore, Saleh (2009) argues that President Harry Truman worked hard to promote Israel through calling upon Britain to allow the immigration of 100,000 Jewish immigrants to Palestine (Saleh, 2009). In addition, Truman supported the UN Partition Plan in 1947, and recognized Israel as a state eleven minutes after its formal declaration in 1948, in spite of the State Department's objection (Halabi, 2016). Following the creation of the state of Israel, American officials did not consider Palestinians as an independent nation, but as a refugee problem (Bustami, 1990). Since that time, the Palestine-Israeli conflict continued to be significant in the Middle East policies of the US. The Cold War era can be divided into two periods:

1948 - 1967

Since its establishment in 1948, Israel was the most important strategic ally of the US, especially given the support the Soviet Union extended to Arab states in the region. Thus, the US supported Israel in all aspects, including economic and military support. Yaqub (2004) argues that this followed from Israel serving as a defender of American national interests in the Middle East, including containing Arab nationalists who were considered a puppet of the Soviets in the region (Yaqub, 2004). US support for Israel strengthened in 1967 after Israel's victory in the Six Days War against its Arab neighbors supported by the Soviet Union (Karakoulaki, 2013).

US foreign policy centered on the Israeli perspective and thus ignored the Palestinian perspective. Abu-Lughod (1990) argues that the US tended to deal with states, such as Arab

states, and thus Palestinians were outside of US policy consideration. Palestinians were seen as a refugee problem, people who needs to be settled and compensated, but not returned (Abu-Lughod, 1990). Further, Hilal (2007) emphasizes that while US presidents might have supported the right of return for Palestinian refugees, their pro-Israeli ideology, as well as Zionist pressure prevented them from adopting this Palestinian claim (Hilal, 2007). Further, the US considered the question of Palestine as one aspect of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but not the core one.

None of US presidents from Truman to Johnson were able to solve the conflict and push for peace through implementing UN Resolutions 194 and 181 (Azar, 2011). The US continued to refuse the recognition of Palestinian political rights, including the right to self-determination. No attention was paid to the Palestinians; they were seen as nonexistent. Khader (2005) argues that after the 1967 war, UN Security Council 242 was managed by the Johnson administration in favor of Israel; it did not force Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories, but it forced the Arab countries to recognize Israel's right to exist (Khader, 2005). For Johnson, Israel should be compelled to withdraw from the Occupied Territories only for a peaceful settlement. Azar (2011) argues that the creation of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964 led the US to consider it as a terrorist group that fights Israel and threatens the US principle of stability in the Middle East (Azar, 2011).

1967 - 1991

Since the Six Day War in 1967, American foreign policy in the Middle East grew increasingly Israeli centered. Silverburg (1993) argues that the US was hostile to the PLO because it was a Palestinian nationalist movement. The US has combated all Third World nationalist movements because it affected American strategic interests in the Middle East

(Silverburg, 1993). Aruri (1989) emphasizes that all US administrations from Johnson to Bush I, supported UN Resolution 242 as the cornerstone for a proper settlement (Aruri, 1989). However, none of them was able to force Israel to withdraw from the Occupied Territories and return the land to Palestinians. Actually, this final settlement of the conflict would not consider Israel as a state that violated Palestinian rights, including the right to self-determination in the West Bank and Gaza (Aruri, 1989).

Schmaglowski (2007) argues that the peace process was consistently weakened because the US shielded Israel from international scrutiny and thus Israel was able to refuse all peace initiatives, including Roger's Plan in 1969 and Shultz's Plan in 1988, suggested by the US and which called for Israel's withdrawal from the Occupied Territories (Schmaglowski, 2007). By doing so, the US encouraged Israel to retain the Occupied Territories, and ignored the Palestinian right to self-determination. Moreover, Neff (1995) argues that Israel refused the participation of the PLO in the peace process as a political factor, and it asked that Palestinian delegations appointed by Israel to be part of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. The US agreed to exclude the PLO from the peace process, including the Madrid Conference in 1991. Thus, Palestinians participated in the peace process as an integral part of the Jordanian delegation, and not as a separate part (Neff, 1995).

Further, Borgan (1989) emphasizes that the US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger promised Israel that the US would refuse to negotiate with the PLO unless they were to recognize Israel's existence, and recognize the UN Resolutions 242 and 338 (Brogan, 1989). Chomsky (1991) argues that by rejecting negotiations with the PLO, the US denied Palestinians the right to choose their political representatives (Chomsky, 1991). The political settlement of the Palestine-Israeli conflict thus became intertwined with the US-Israeli "special relationship"

which counter balanced the threat of the Soviet Union. Thus, the US-Israeli special relationship undermined Palestinian rights and national aspirations. Aruri (1989) argues that the American Jewish community as well as American public opinion favored Israel against Palestinian claims (Aruri, 1989).

Post-Cold War Era: America as a Global Hegemonic Power

After the end of the Cold War, the US emerged as the only super-power in the world. The international system shifted from bipolar to unipolar. This means that the US became the only hegemonic power that could hope to unilaterally implement policies in this new world order. Feldman (1996) argues that the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union led to an increase in US-Israeli strategic cooperation, even though their primary motivations for strategic cooperation had ended, namely containing Soviet expansion and deterring the Arab nationalist awakening (Feldman, 1996). The absence of a competing hegemonic power has given the US an upper hand in managing the Palestine-Israeli conflict. Chomsky (1994) argues that the unipolarity of the US at the global and the regional levels allowed it to pursue various policies to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the new world order (Chomsky, 1994). Morra (2016) argues that the Madrid Conference in 1991 and the Oslo Accords in 1993 were direct results of America's new global standing (Morra, 2016).

Bishara (2002) emphasizes that the Oslo Accords sponsored by the US in 1993 was a cover for Israel to grab more Palestinian lands (Bishara, 2002, 90). Thus, under the Clinton administration, the US held the most anti-Palestinian positions regarding sensitive issues, including Israeli settlements, the annexation of Jerusalem, and the refugee problem, because they

were accepted, and not considered illegal (Bishara, 2002). Further, Mattar (2005) argues that Clinton was the most pro-Israeli president in American history. Instead of pressing for the end of Israeli occupations and settlements, the Clinton administration allowed Israel to withdraw from the negotiations without the implementation of redeployments called for in the Oslo Accords (Mattar, 2005).

Moreover, Azar (2011) argues that the misunderstanding of the Palestinian cause at the negotiating table by the Clinton administration led to the failure of the Oslo Accords in 1993 (Azar, 2011). In addition, Mattar (2005) argues that the Clinton administration's failure to halt the steady expansion of Israeli control over the Occupied Territories led to the failure of the Camp David Summit in 2000 (Mattar, 2005). Moreover, Clinton blamed Arafat and the Palestinians for the failure of the peace process. In addition, Mearsheimer (2008) argues that the Clinton administration supported Israel unconditionally through protecting the Jewish state from criticism at the United Nations, and giving it the largest part of American foreign aid (Mearsheimer, 2008).

Since the signing of the Oslo Accords and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the US began providing financial aid to the Palestinians (Zanotti, 2010). The US was the largest donor of financial aid to the Palestinians and the US government had given more than \$5 billion to the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. US aid reaches Palestinians through: USAID, Budget Support for the PA, and UNRWA. This aid aimed to prevent terrorism against Israel, maintain peaceful co-existence with Israel, and serve humanitarian needs (Zanotti, 2010). The Palestinian Authority was in turn bound by these purposes, and any loss of commitment would lead to a cut in US aid.

Post 9/11 Era: American Unilateralism

Since the end of the Cold War, the US became the only superpower in the international order in all aspects, including political, economy and military dimensions. Thus, US hegemony was seen as invincible. However, Rathnayake (2016) states that the 9/11 attacks affected American supremacy (Rathnayake, 2016). Further, Debin (2012) likewise argues that the 9/11 attacks posed a serious threat to American hegemony in the international order. The US wanted to reassert its superior military power through launching the War on Terror (Krauthammer, 2002).

Daalder (2003) states that under the Bush administration, US foreign policy shifted from multilateralism to unilateralism to maintain American hegemony in the international order through acting to safeguard its national interests (Daalder, 2003). The US implemented foreign policies to maintain its hegemony and safeguard its national interests in the Middle East. Democracy promotion was part of US foreign policy against terrorism to maintain American hegemony in the region. The holy land had become part of the global war on terror (Halabi, 2016). Mohamad (2015) argues that for the Bush administration, democracy promotion in the Middle East was a precondition for establishing Palestinian statehood (Mohamad, 2015). This means that in order to establish a Palestinian statehood, the Arab region as well as the Palestinian people would need to fight terrorism and meet certain standards of tolerance towards Israel.

Halabi (2016); Mohamad (2015) argue that George W. Bush was the first American president to recognize the Palestinian right to self-determination and to have an independent state alongside Israel (Halabi, 2016; Mohamad, 2015). For Bush, Arafat was a member of the axis of evil and no peace could be reached with him (Zoughbie, 2014). Thus, Bush asked the Palestinian

people to renounce terrorism and elect a new Palestinian leadership to gain their right to self-determination because terrorism was in Bush's mind the reason behind depriving Palestinians of their right to self-determination, not the Israeli occupation. The US supported free and fair elections in Palestine through allowing Islamic groups like Hamas to participate (Sharp, 2006). The Bush administration was however unfair towards Palestinians; it focused on asking Palestinians to reform their PA, elect a new leadership and "denounce terrorism" in favor of Israel's security demands, while covering Israel's use of force to defend itself in the Occupied Territories (Halabi, 2016; Mohamad, 2015). Bush considered Israel's conflict with the Palestinians during the Second Intifada to be similar to the US conflict with Islamic terrorism. Thus, the Bush administration backed Israel's unilateral actions in the Palestinian territories which involved unprecedented force (Mohamad, 2015).

Mohamad (2015) argues that after the election victory of Hamas in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the Bush administration did not accept Palestinians' electoral choices due to Israel's rejection (Mohamad, 2015). This raised doubts about US impartiality and its effect on the peace process and democratization. Further, Gordon (2014) emphasizes that after the election victory of Hamas in 2006, the US decided to cut its direct aid to the Palestinian Authority. It restored the aid when Abbas expelled Hamas out of the shared government. It was a penalization for the Palestinians because they did not chose leaders that were acceptable for Israel and the US. In addition, Rose (2014) argues that Hamas' victory in 2006 was also used as an excuse for Israel's unilateralism against the Palestinians (Rose, 2014).

Mohamad (2015) argues that Bush failed to solve the Palestine-Israeli conflict through his two state plan and the Road Map because they failed to provide details about final status issues, including Jerusalem, the Refugee Problem, and the Settlements (Mohamad, 2015). In

addition, Veliotis (2002) argues that the Bush plan was a one sided vision; it asked everything from the Palestinian government, but asked nothing from the Israeli government (Veliotis, 2002). US foreign policy was thus contradictory towards Palestine after 9/11.

2.3. Application of Theory on the Study

As mentioned above, the US implemented a multifaceted policy to counter terrorism and maintain its hegemonic status in the Middle East after 9/11. Palestine had become enveloped in this War on Terror. The US asked the Palestinians to reform the PA, elect a new leadership and counter terrorism to gain statehood. However, it asked nothing from the Israeli government. The spread of democracy was the main goal of US foreign policy towards Palestine to counter terrorism, thus American officials demanded certain standards of tolerance towards Israel.

These foreign policies are compatible with the expectations of the theory of Neo-Conservatism. This theory emphasizes that America's military, political and economic power is a force for good in the world (Middup, 2006). This was reflected in the US foreign policy through using military force to spread democracy and counter terrorism in the Middle East. The US gave Israel a free hand in dealing with the Palestinians because both states believed they were threatened by terrorism. Neo-conservatism aims to increase US hegemony in the Middle East (Davis, 2008). The US implemented regime changes in the Middle East and pushed democratic reforms on the Palestinian Authority in favor of Israel's security. Further, Neoconservatives are strong supporters of Israel, dubious about Arab intentions (Steinfels, 2013). This was reflected in US foreign policy through Bush's pro-Israel policy. He gave Israel all the freedom it needed to counter Palestinian violence.

This chapter has attempted to analyze US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11 from a theoretical perspective. It was divided into three parts: an overview of international relations theories, an overview of the historical roots of US foreign policy towards Palestine, and finally a description of the implementation of US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11 within a theoretical framework. It aimed to summarize previous research on US foreign policy towards Palestine before and after 9/11 from a theoretical approach.

The next chapter will define the main determinants of US foreign policy and discuss the decision making process towards Palestine before 9/11.

CHAPTER THREE:

DETERMINANTS OF US FOREIGN POLICY BEFORE 9/11

This chapter defines the main determinants of US foreign policy and discusses the decision making process towards Palestine before 9/11, how foreign policy decisions are being made in the US, and by whom. This chapter will provide a clear understanding of the main factors that affect the decision making process towards Palestine before 9/11, and explain the justifications of decisions taken by policy-makers towards Palestine.

US foreign policy is very complex because it is shaped by both domestic and international factors, and it is thus not made in a vacuum. Numerous actors inside and outside the state work to affect it. These determinants shape US foreign policy toward the Middle East in general and Palestine in particular. The following is an overview of international and domestic determinants before 9/11.

3.1. International Determinants

Different international determinants shaped US foreign policy towards Palestine before 9/11, including the structure of the international system, and national interests. The following is an overview of international determinants that played a significant role.

3.1.1. The Structure of the International System

In realist theory, the main feature of the international system is anarchism. Each state struggles to survive. The structure of the international system shapes a country's foreign policy. The U.S. is no exception (Ambrosio, 2017, 3). The U.S. has always struggled to maintain its hegemonic status in the Middle East to serve American national interests. During the Cold War, the structure of international system was bipolar in which the US and the Soviet Union were the world's superpowers (Ward, 2006, iii). The Middle East was a primary strategic area of competition between the both sides in large part due to oil reserves and the geographic centrality of the region. The question of Palestine was subordinate to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and Palestinians were unimportant. However, Israel was a strategic ally in the containment of communism in the region. As Karakoulaki (2013) said: "In addition, Israel was considered one of the most important allies and strategic assets to the USA during the Cold War, especially since its neighboring Arab States had the support of the Soviet Union" (Karakoulaki, 2013, 6). Israel was necessary to safeguard America's national interests in the region.

After the end of the Cold War and the failure of the Soviet Union, the U.S. became the only superpower in the world. The structure of international system was transformed into a unipolar system. As Gordon (2014) said: "the United States finds itself at the apex of the international system, possessing the ability to project its power and influence throughout the world in an unrivaled manner" (Gordon, 2014, 3). This unipolar moment allowed the U.S. to pursue different foreign policies to stabilize the Middle East, and push forward the Palestine-Israeli peace process. The Madrid Conference and the Oslo Accords were direct results of America's New World Order (Morra, 2016, 64). The unipolar world facilitated the Palestine-Israeli peace process. The special relationship between the US and Israel continued to be a

cornerstone of America's foreign policy. As a result, US foreign policy was biased to Israel. Further, the Palestine-Israeli peace process was set as Israel saw fit. Palestinians were blamed for the failure of the peace process (Al-Rousan, 2013, 206).

3.1.2. National Interests

The U.S. has long been involved in the Middle East to protect its national interests. U.S. foreign policy was designed to advance those national interests in the region. Several national interests shaped U.S. foreign policy towards Palestine before 9/11, including securing strategic access to oil, ensuring the security of Israel, containing communism, and resisting Islamic fundamentalism.

3.1.2.1. Access to Oil

Since the end of World War II, the U.S. became highly dependent on Middle Eastern oil. Ensuring stability to secure access to cheap oil and prevent any hostile state from controlling it became a primary interest of the U.S. in the region. As Al Sarhan (2017) said: "The Middle East was very attractive to both the United States government and American petroleum companies due to its proven long-term oil reserves" (Al Sarhan, 2017, 460). This means that access to Arab oil is the cornerstone of U.S. Middle East foreign policy. To pursue this interest in a realist framework, the U.S. should pursue regional stability at the expense of human rights. An Israel that feels insecure and without any major ally might act in a way that harms America's interests, especially access to oil in the region (Waxer, 2013, 33). Thus, unlimited support for Israel is

economically and militarily justified. The special relationship between the U.S. and Israel helps in U.S. access to cheap oil.

American access to Arab oil is linked to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In the 1973 Oil Crisis, the Organization of Arab Petroleum imposed an embargo against the U.S. due to its support for Israel during the 1973 War (Worley, 2015, 148). This had a direct impact on the U.S. economy. Thus, the US realized the importance of solving the Palestinian question to protect American national interests, especially oil in the Gulf region. This shows that Arabs used oil as a strategic and political weapon against America's support of Israel. The U.S. goal of stability was threatened by the Arab oil boycott of 1973. The US wanted to stabilize its relations with Arabs by pushing forward the peace process to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. The U.S. efforts to promote peace in the region could not be taken for granted. In 1978, President Jimmy Carter succeeded in leading the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt. These peaceful negotiations were in Israel's interests (Quandt, 2011, 334).

After the end of the Cold War, the U.S. wanted to ensure stability in the Middle East through promoting a peace process. Thus, solving the Palestine-Israeli conflict became a central component of U.S. Middle East foreign policy. That was because "the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has historically caused many crises and wars, resolving this conflict would lessen the risk of interrupted oil flows from the Middle East" (Adam, 2015, 10). This shows that solving the Palestine-Israeli conflict would promote stability in the region and protect American national interests, especially access to cheap oil. However, with the end of the Cold War and the failure of the Soviet Union, the US became the only superpower globally and regionally. Israel became a strategic ally, while the Arabs, especially Palestinians, became weaker because they lost a political and military ally, the Soviet Union. Therefore, Arabs were not able to oppose the U.S.-

led peace process. As Morra (2016) said: “In essence, the collapse of the Soviet Union, which marked the end of the Cold War led to a shift in the balance of power both at the international and regional levels as well as changes in the rules of how the game was played” (Morra, 2016, 64). US-led peace talks, including the Madrid Conference of 1991, and the Oslo Accords of 1993, were all in Israel’s interest.

3.1.2.2. Security of Israel

Since its establishment, Israel was a U.S. priority. Israel and the U.S. are bound by shared historic and cultural ties as well as by shared interests. Israel serves as a strategic ally to safeguard America’s national interests in the Middle East. There is a deep commitment by U.S. policymakers to Israel’s security. As President Jimmy Carter in a press conference said: “We have a special relationship with Israel. It’s absolutely crucial that no one in our country or around the world ever doubt that our number one commitment in the Middle East is to protect the right of Israel to exist, to exist permanently, and to exist in peace” (Carter, 1977). This special relationship between the U.S. and Israel is reflected in a commonwealth of shared interests. Further, the U.S. foreign aid to Israel is the cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy in the region. Israel has been the largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid (Sharp, 2010). The strength of this relationship has fueled hatred toward the U.S. in the region.

Israel is America’s most reliable friend in the Middle East. That is because America’s national interests are best served by Israel. Thus, the nature of America’s special relationship with Israel affects U.S. foreign policy toward the Palestine-Israeli conflict. As Christison (2001) said: “In a frame of reference that so enthusiastically envelops Israel and so automatically approaches the conflict from the Israeli point of view, there has been little room for the Palestinian perspective” (Christison, 2001, 3). This means that support for Israel has been the

cornerstone of America's foreign policy towards the Middle East, especially the Palestine-Israeli conflict.

During the Cold War, Israel was a strategic ally for the U.S. through containing the Soviet threat in the region. America's top priority was to protect Israel. For the US, a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict was based on resolutions 242 and 338 which call for the exchange of "land for peace" with an emphasis on Israel's security. Neither Palestinians, nor their right to self-determination over the West Bank and Gaza Strip, were mentioned (Anziska, 2013, 17). The U.S. failed to pressure Israel to withdraw from the Occupied Territories. After the end of the Cold War, U.S. foreign policy was the most biased to Israel. That was due to the US-Israeli special relationship. The Clinton administration was the most biased, especially in making Israel the only winning side in the peace process. As Al-Rousan (2013) said: "President Clinton represented a distinctive mark in the American-Israeli relation as being the most biased presidents in the accomplishment of the Israeli aims by pushing the Palestinian and Jordanian parties to work as Israel liked in regard to common economic, security and political arrangements" (Al-Rousan, 2013, 199). The Clinton administration looked at the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through an Israeli lens. Thus, the US-led peace process, and the sponsorship of the Oslo Accords of 1993 reflect the pro-Israel bias in the Clinton's administration through serving Israeli aims.

3.1.2.3. The Containment of Communism

After World War II, the US defined itself as the "leader of the free world" against Soviet communism. The US was responsible for ensuring freedom, democracy and peace in the world.

As Patterson said: “many American foreign policy experts perceived the struggle between communists and capitalists as an existential battle between forces of good and evil.” (Patterson, 2018, 22). This battle against the spread of communism reflected “unshakable conviction” in American exceptionalism. The US, as the chosen nation must save humanity and protect the free and democratic nations from the evils of communism. American exceptionalism became a weapon to counter communism in the world. The policy of containment was defined in the Truman Doctrine and was adopted by successive American administrations during the Cold War era. According to Leonard (2013), the policy of containment included many American initiatives. For example, the Marshall Plan (1947), which was designed to revive European economies with American money and way of life. Similarly, the US intervened in other nation’s affairs through the “modernization” theory, which emphasized that the US could help underdeveloped country to move from “traditional” to “modern.” (Leonard, 2013, 1104). These American initiatives were justified with the desire to ensure international security.

The United States and its allies competed with the Soviet Union and its allies economically, military, and ideological. The primary goal of American foreign policy was to prevent the Soviet Union from becoming a regional hegemon and disturbing the balance of power. Ensuring stability was the fundamental objective of US foreign policy to protect the national interests especially in the Middle East. Accordingly, Hahn (2005) said: “As a result, the United States began practicing a fundamental policy of anticommunist containment that remained a bedrock objective through the remainder of the Cold War” (Hahn, 2011). The competition between the world’s superpowers introduced American direct involvement in the region’s affairs. The US strategies to counter communism through the Baghdad Pact or Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in 1955, which was a pro-Western alliance between countries,

including the US, the UK, Iraq, Iran and Turkey. These countries were asked to cooperate for their security against the rising influence of Soviet communism and Arab nationalism. The US tried to contain Arab nationalism through the denial of economic and military aid. But, the US supported pro-West Arab regimes in the Persian Gulf and provided them with economic and military assistance to maintain American national interests, including ensuring access to oil, and countering communism. According to Al Sarhan (2017), this client-relationship allowed the US to maintain easy access to oil and establish more military bases in the region (Al Sarhan, 2017, 467). The US was prepared to provide any Middle Eastern country with economic and military aid against international communism.

With regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the US foreign policy was pro-Israel. This bonding increased due to Cold War strategies. As major regional states, including Egypt was backed by the Soviets, Israel emerged as a strategic ally of the US. As Baxter & Akbarzadeh (2012) said: “Although religious and cultural affinities are often a matter of focus, the Israel–US alliance can most constructively be understood as a byproduct of the Cold War” (Baxter & Akbarzadeh, 2012, 136). Since Israel’s victory in the Six Day War in 1967, US officials realized that Israel could be the single most important ally in the region. Israel succeeded in suppressing radical Arab nationalists, and proving its military superiority over Arab military. Thus, the US was committed to Israel’s security. No American administration from Eisenhower to Reagan succeeded in finding a comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and recognizing the Palestinian right to self-determination. The American effort to solve the conflict was aimed at protecting Israel’s interests, rather than achieving a comprehensive peace in the region. Finally, the Cold War ended with the collapse of Soviet communism in December 1991.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US became the only superpower in the world. The US foreign policy was no longer concerned with containing communism. As Cox & Stokes (2012) said that: “With the collapse first of the Berlin Wall and subsequently Soviet communism itself, the United States stood in need of a new way of grounding its internationalist engagement” (Cox & Stokes, 2012, 82). With the disappearance of common enemy, the loyalty of US foreign allies in exchange of protection and security from the US was necessary. There was a hope that the anarchy of world order could be replaced by enduring peace and stability. The Clinton administration replaced the rhetoric of “containment” by the rhetoric of “engagement and enlargement,” and relied on the power of international institutions, such as the United Nations to promote peace, democracy and human rights worldwide. The world had become unipolar in economic, military, and ideological senses.

3.1.2.4. Resisting Islamic Fundamentalism

As the significance of communism declined after the end of the Cold War, greater attention has been paid to the rising of Islamic fundamentalism. The Western powers and especially the US, were concerned owing to the ideology of these extremist groups which is hostile to the West. As Karabell (1995) said: “On one side, there is a belief that Islamic fundamentalism is the new communism and consequently must be opposed with whatever means are necessary to contain the fundamentalist threat” (Karabell, 1995, 37). Islamic fundamentalism has been regarded as dangerous as communism to the regional stability and American interests in the Middle East. This reflects a clash of civilization between Muslims and the West, as advocated by the theory of Huntington. Islamic fundamentalism views the capitalist world as an aggressive enemy. The rise of Islamism came from the assumption that Muslims weakness and

defeat in the face of the West was due to their “turning away from God,” or “deviating off the straight path of Islam.” As Davidson (2009) argued that the loss of God’s favor is the result of the fascination and dependence upon the West (Davidson, 2009, 1).

The explosion of terrorism in the Middle East was entangled with the Iranian revolution (1978-1979), which called for an active struggle based on Islamic cultural heritage, rather than the Western cultural heritage. For fundamentalists, American culture has polluted Islamic traditions and values. Thus, promoting extremism became the fundamental objective of the Iranian foreign policy against the US and Israel. Consequently, religiously inspired extremists spread across the Middle East. During the 1980s, “US officials were calling the Middle East “the crucible of terrorism,” and nearly half of recorded attacks occurred or originated in the region” (Brands, 2016, 232). US officials were dominated by fear of radical Islam. Iranian financial aid flowed to many Islamist fundamentalist organizations, including Hezbollah, and Hamas in the struggle against Israel. Pillar (2001) argues that Iran was responsible for the 1983 Beirut Barracks bombing attacks on the U.S. embassy (Pillar, 2001). For many in the West, Islam is the religion of hatred and violence. Al Sarhan (2017) argued that the US policy is dual; it provided the Taliban Islamic forces with economic and military aid about “\$4-5 billion during the years 1980-1992” against the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan. Then, the US accused the Taliban regime of sheltering Al-Qaeda, and its leader Osama Bin Laden, and violating Women’s rights (Al Sarhan, 2017, 467). The US used Islamic groups against the Soviet communism.

Following the Oslo Accords (1993), in which the PLO and Israel recognized each other, the fundamentalists continued their struggle against the “New World Order.” As Tibi (2002) argued that Palestinian fundamentalist Islamist organizations, such as Hamas and the Islamic Jihad committed violent actions in refusal of the peace process (Tibi, 2002). This opposition was

due to Hamas's ideology, which emphasizes on the "Islamic essence" of the Palestine-Israeli conflict. For Hamas, it is a "war of religion" between Islam and Judaism. Moreover, Hamas regards the struggle as a clash of civilization between Islam and the West. As Litvak (1998) said: "Both the capitalist West and the Communist East are regarded as one entity in this context because of their support for Zionism" (Litvak, 1998, 150). For Hamas and other Islamic fundamentalist organizations, this is a struggle between good and evil.

3.2. Domestic Determinants

U.S. foreign policy towards Palestine, is shaped by different domestic determinants. These domestic determinants can be divided into two types: Formal Domestic Determinants and Informal Domestic Determinants.

3.2.1. Formal Domestic Determinants

The conduct of American foreign policy is regulated under the US Constitution through a system of checks and balances. The Constitution gives both the Executive branch (the President) and the Legislative branch (Congress) the power and the legal authority to make the US foreign policy (Grimmett, 1999, 1). The following is an overview of the important roles played both by the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch.

3.2.1.1. The Executive Branch (The Institution of the Presidency)

The Executive Branch is represented by the White House, which is composed of the President, Vice President, and the Cabinet which includes the Secretary of State, the National

Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) that help the president in making his decisions. The presidency is the most important institution among other institutional actors in shaping US foreign policy (Oldemeinen, 2012).

The President

The American president is at the top of the political pyramid. He is the main architect of a foreign policy that is based on America's national interests in the world (Allison & Blackwill, 2000, 2). The importance of the president's role in making foreign policy is derived from the powers that are given by Constitution. The Constitution states that: "the President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States." (U.S Const. Art. II, § 2). The US president is thus primarily responsible for executive government as both the head of state and the head of government, and the commander of the US military. The US president has an unparalleled level of influence over US foreign policy. However, he is not an autonomous decision-maker (Robison, 2005, 1). He does not act alone, but consults with the Vice President, the White House Staff, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Advisor and the Director of the CIA (Dumbrell, 1990, 48).

While American foreign policy is usually based on national interests, domestic demands and influences also affect it. As Scholten (2017) said: "In a perfect world, the decisions made in the field of foreign policy would be based on the nation's best interests in the context of geopolitics and economics. However, the world is not perfect, and therefore, presidents have to consider domestic demands when making foreign policy decisions" (Scholten, 2017, 14). Presidential decision-making can be affected by various domestic factors, including ideology,

religion, beliefs and culture, childhood experience, crisis, Congress, advisors and officials, media, public opinion and interest groups. Thus, each of these factors affects presidential decision-making process.

Israel's security is a priority among American national interests in the Middle East, due to the "special relationship" between Israel and the US. This special relationship has always been supported by the American leadership to varying degrees. As Cavari & Nyer (2016) said: "Ever since the establishment of Israel, American leaders have demonstrated strong support for it —by securing military and economic aid; by intervening during military conflicts; by supporting Israel's interests on the international stage; and in binational relations during peace negotiations" (Cavari & Nyer, 2016, 9). Israel has become an overriding issue in American foreign policy; it is regularly invoked in party platforms and during presidential election seasons. The American political culture usually favors the Israeli perspective against the Palestinian perspective. As Christison (2001) said: "Each has been influenced to one degree or another by a national mind-set that is focused principally on Israel" (Christison, 2001, 287). The special relationship influences presidential decision-making process, and favors Israel at the expense of the Palestinian viewpoint.

US presidents, subject to domestic political pressure, have shown their support for Israel through many policies. During the start of the Cold War, President Harry Truman recognized Israel eleven minutes after the proclamation of independence, in spite of the State Department's refusal. However, Truman was not aware of the Palestinians' real grievances. Truman's recognition of Israel was based on many factors, including his considerations that Israel would be a close strategic ally against Soviet expansion in the Middle East (Devine, 2008, 38). Further, Truman's recognition of Israel was based on his biblical beliefs that Jews should return to

Palestine and Arabs were unimportant and barbaric (Christison, 2002). For Truman, a Jewish presence seemed more fitting than an Arab presence in Palestine. Further, Truman's recognition of Israel was influenced by his Zionist friend and White House adviser, Clark Clifford, who also wanted to gain the votes of US Jews in the 1948 elections (Hahn, 2006, 26).

After the end of the Cold War the US became the leader of the world and it gained the upper hand in managing the Palestine-Israeli conflict and the peace process. This peace process was a direct result of America's role in the new world order. President Bill Clinton was the most pro-Israeli president in American history (Mattar, 2005, 512). Clinton supported Israel through sponsoring the Oslo Accords in 1993 and the Camp David Summit in 2000. Clinton's main policy was to do nothing until Israel was "ready." Further, the Clinton administration changed the terms of reference for UN Resolution 242, including undermining the concept "territories for peace," and considering the territories to be "disputed" not occupied, and arguing that Israel had the right to negotiate the retention of part of the territories. Further, Israeli settlements moved from being illegal and obstacles to peace under the Carter and the Reagan administrations into being mere complicating factors under the Clinton administration (Christison, 2001, 278).

Moreover, Clinton supported Israel's illegal actions against Palestinians through preventing any kind of criticism against Israel in the United Nations, and giving Israel more aid than others (Mearsheimer, 2008, 147). Accordingly, Al-Rousan (2013) said: "Clinton's policy always implied a biased stand for Israel. The moment it stated its sponsorship of the peace process, its real essence conformed, in principle and in practice, with Israeli policies contradicting international legitimacy" (Al-Rousan, 2013, 208). Clinton's policies and decisions, including the peace process, were excuses to support Israel in the region, ensure its superiority and security and safeguard its illegal expansion in the occupied territories.

On one hand, the Palestinians had closer ties with Clinton than any previous president, and they became a legitimate factor in US foreign policy. On the other hand, Clinton was not fully aware of the Palestinian's grievances. He was influenced by the American mindset and thus blamed the Palestinians for the collapse of the peace process (Christison, 2002). Further, Clinton's policies and decisions towards Palestine were influenced by a group of advisors and seniors who were partisans of Israel more than those found in any previous administration, including Vice President Albert Gore, Secretary of State Madeline Albright and a Senior Official in the National Security Council Martin Indyk (Neff, 1994, 20-23). They worked on keeping Israel strong while the peaceful negotiations continued. Further, Clinton was influenced by the liberal internationalist approach to the peace process (Rynhold, 2015, 80).

3.2.1.2. The Legislative Branch

The Legislative Branch is represented by the Congress. The following is an overview of the role of Congress in shaping US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11, and the factors that influence the decision-making process.

Congress is the nation's legislative, or lawmaking body. It has two chambers: the House of Representatives and the Senate (McNeese, 2014, 42). Congress plays a role in framing US foreign policy through the powers that are granted by the Constitution. As Auerswald & Campbell (2012) said: "Congress received the power to declare war, and military appropriations were limited to two years, to provide a check against militaristic legislators. The power of the purse, and authority to regulate foreign commerce, also were assigned to Congress" (Auerswald & Campbell, 2012, 19). This shows that Congress can influence foreign policy through declaring

war, passing laws and legislations, regulating foreign trade, controlling the budget and foreign aid.

Although the President has more authority over foreign policy than Congress, it still plays an important role in affecting the foreign policy toward the Palestine-Israeli conflict through providing Israel with economic and military aid. This support is for many reasons, including Israel as a strategic ally to safeguard America's national interests in the region, the Jewish vote in congressional elections, and the pro-Israel's lobby pressure. On one hand, Congress supports the Palestinian Authority through aid appropriations. As Zanotti (2014) said: "Since the signing of the Oslo Accord in 1993, Congress has committed more than \$5 billion in bilateral assistance to the Palestinians" (Zanotti, 2014, 1). This means that Congressional aid to the Palestinians can be used as a tool for a politically-motivated financial pressure for the Israelis' benefit. Congress has provided assistance to the Palestinian Authority and institutions, in order to ensure that Israel has a partner for peace. For several years, Congress has insisted that US aid to the Palestinians should be monitored to make sure that it is not going to terrorist groups (Sharp, 2006, 4). In 1998, Congress acted to prohibit assistance to the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation, which has been benefiting from US aid while engaging in "pro-violent" and "hatred campaigns" against Israelis (Congress, U. S., 1998, 19322). After 9/11, Congress aid was a tool in the war on terror. In December 2001, Congress asked President Bush to suspend relations with the Palestinian Authority and its President Yasser Arafat unless he decided to renounce terrorism. Congress passed the Foreign Operations Appropriation Bill of 2002, which prohibited any aid funds to the Palestinian Authority unless it renounced terrorism, but also continued humanitarian aid to the Palestinians (Nowels, 2002, 11). Following the Hamas victory in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections, Congress and the Bush Administration decided to reduce US assistance to the

Palestinians. However, in 2007, Congress and the Bush Administration boosted US aid to the PA's security, governance and development offices following Hamas's takeover of Gaza, and President Mahmoud Abbas's dismissal of Hamas ministers from government (Zanotti, 2012, 6-7).

On the other hand, Congress continued its support for Israel economically and militarily regardless of its illegal actions against the Palestinians. Since 1976, Israel has been the largest recipient of US aid (Mark, 2005, 1). This is due to the US Congress's unlimited support for Israel through bills, resolutions and acts. As Cavari & Nyer (2016) said: "Congress consistently supported appropriations bills to aid Israel economically and militarily, and passed resolutions in support of Israel even when this meant acting against the position of the administration" (Cavari & Nyer, 2016, 13). Congress works to maintain the special relationship between Israel and the US. Since 1967, Congress has consistently claimed that the US should recognize united Jerusalem as Israel's capital. For example, Congress passed the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 which mandated that the US embassy should be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Every president until now, either Democratic or Republican, has adopted the position that the final status of Jerusalem should be determined by negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis (Berger, 2002, 124).

Different factors affect the role of Congress in foreign policy-making towards Palestine. The most influential factor is the pro-Israeli Lobby, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). As Peters & Newman (2013) said: "It is undoubtedly the behemoth among pro-Israel groups, and it exerts a lot of influence in Congress-the bills supporting Israel that it drafts and/or promotes often receive almost unanimous support in both the House of Representatives and the Senate" (Peters & Newman, 2013, 363). This means that AIPAC has an

unchallenged hold on the US Congress, and it can exert its influence on Democratic and Republican Congressmen. This is due to AIPAC's financial support for legislators and congressional candidates who support its agenda. Any members of Congress who do not fall into line will be threatened politically and financially (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006, 42).

AIPAC is a source of information and it is often called upon to work on legislation, draft speeches, and provide advice on tactics (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006, 43). This means that AIPAC is pressuring on Congress to support Israel. In 1995, AIPAC backed a congressional bill to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem (Young, 2014, 216).

3.2.2. Informal Domestic Determinants

The foreign policy of the United States is also influenced by non-governmental actors. As Shipoli (2018) said: "These actors have not been governmentally established, so their main roles are in creating influence and pressure on the decision-makers" (Shipoli, 2018, 29). This means that informal determinants which operate outside the government help develop and promote American foreign policy. There are different non-governmental actors with influence on foreign policy, including Public Opinion, the Media, and Interest Group Lobbying, especially the Israel Lobby. The following is an overview of the role of these non-governmental actors in shaping the US foreign policy towards Palestine before 9/11.

3.2.2.1. Public Opinion

In a democratic country like the U.S., public opinion has become so important because the people are the ultimate source of power. Thus, any policymaker has to pay attention to public

opinion when formulating policy. The American public opinion can be defined as: “the expression of ideas and matters of general importance by a significant number of people” (Hennessy 1981, 4). This means that public opinion has an important impact on U.S. foreign policy, especially at times of crisis. This impact is partially reflected through polls of public support foreign policies (Martel, 2002, 126).

Public opinion influences US foreign policy towards the Palestine-Israeli conflict. Since before the establishment of Israel, Americans, both Republicans and Democrats, have strongly supported Israel. As Curtiss (1980) said: “Clearly, most Americans feel that supporting Israel is the right thing to do. This American public support for Israel began in the post-World War II period” (Curtiss, 1980). Americans have historically favored the Israelis far more than the Palestinians, for many reasons, including that Israel is a vital strategic asset in the Middle East, is the only “democratic country” in the Middle East, and viewed as a “victim” of Palestinian aggression (Weldon, 2015). American public support for Israel is based on strategic ties, and religious ties, especially the “Judeo-Christian” heritage, or the “Old Testament” that is believed by most Christians and Jews. This Old Testament teaches that Jews were “God’s chosen people,” Palestine were their “promised land,” and the return of the Messiah is dependent on the establishment of the state of Israel (Geddes & Griffiths, 2001, 6). The protection of the state of Israel became a religious duty.

U.S. opinion polls indicate that Americans favor Israel especially during a crisis as this enhances Israel’s value to the U.S. as a strategic ally in the Middle East. This sympathy is reflected through the Gallup Poll, in which Americans respond to consistently asked question: “In the Middle East situation, are your sympathies more with Israel or with the Arabs/Palestinians?” Beginning with the creation of the state of Israel in May 1948, “more than

60 percent of Americans supported the creation of the state of Israel, and only 10 percent opposed it” (Rynhold, 2015, 19). Since then, Americans lean further toward the Israelis especially during periods of violence. During the 1967 Six Day War, American public opinion was more interested in the Arab-Israeli conflict than before. The Gallup Poll found that 45% of Americans sympathized with Israel, while 4% sympathized with the Arabs (Ruby, 2007). After the Sabra and Shatila massacre in 1982, the Gallup Poll found that the American sympathy with Israel had dropped from 49% to 32%, while the American sympathy with Arabs had increased from 10% to 28% (De Boer, 1983). This was reflected in the US government position towards the Arabs and especially the Palestinians in the 1970s and early 1980s; it refused to deal with the PLO, and refused the right of Palestinians to self-determination. However, Israel was seen as a strategic ally (Marrar, 2008, 30). Public opinion expressed concerns about Israel’s security, while devaluing the Palestinian’s right to exist. This was reflected in the U.S. one-sided foreign policy towards supporting Israel economically and militarily against its Arab neighbors (Scheindlin, 2015).

After the end of the Cold War, the American public backed the Clinton administration in its efforts to mediate the peace process between Palestinians and Israelis. As Saad (2000) said: “Roughly one-third, 34%, say it should be a "very important" goal and an additional 43% say it should be a "somewhat important" goal. Only 20% say it is not important” (Saad, 2000). Americans favored a peaceful solution to the Palestine-Israeli conflict, due to the American unipolarity in the new world order. In addition, the American tendency to sympathize more with the Israelis than the Palestinians fell in 1993 due to President Clinton’s efforts to lead peace talks (Saad, 2015).

Different factors affected American public opinion towards Palestine before 9/11, including the Media, the Israeli Lobby, and Religion. The Media has the most influential role over American public opinion towards the Palestine-Israeli conflict. As Moughrabi (1986) said: “The media presented Israel in a favorable light and treated the Arab side in a negative manner (Moughrabi, 1986, 56). American media is biased towards Israel and thus helps to shape anti-Palestinian public opinion. Prior to the First Intifada, Palestinians were considered terrorists and refugees, due to US media coverage (Moughrabi, 1986, 64). However, during the First Intifada, Palestinians and the PLO were considered legitimate due to media images of peaceful Palestinian protests against Israeli repression (Noakes & Wilkins, 2002, 654). The majority of the public supported the endorsement of an independent Palestinian state and the participation of the PLO in the peace process. Richman (1989) argues that in 1988, the Gallup Poll found that 43% of Americans sympathized with Israel, while 20% sympathized with Palestinians (Richman, 1989, 423). This shows a significant increase in pro-Palestinian sympathy.

3.2.2.2. The Media

In a modern and democratic country like the US, the media is the fourth pillar of government. This means that media is an important factor in foreign policy making. Media can be defined as “the means of communication—such as radio, television, and news outlets—that reach or influence people widely” (Ford et al., 2015, 348). This means that, the media and especially the press play an influential role in shaping foreign policy. The media affects the public by: telling them what to think about, informing the public about government policies and how they will affect them and giving the government feedback on their policies by the public

(Soroka et al., 2012, 1). Thus, the media plays a mediating role between decision-makers and the public. US foreign policy is not made by the media, but it can't be made without it.

American media helps shape US foreign policy towards the Palestine-Israeli conflict. The American media's coverage of the conflict tends to favor Israel over the Palestinians. As Barghouti (2017) said: "Palestinians usually make it into mainstream coverage only when they are protesting or physically confronting Israeli aggression. Their outcry is referred to as an "escalation of violence" in the region. There is no "escalation of violence" when Israel steps up its night raids on Palestinian homes or settlers attack Palestinian farmers" (Barghouti, 2017). This means that the media narrative focuses usually on the Palestinians' reaction, and not on the initial Israeli action. Palestinians are presented as the offenders, while the Israelis are presented as the defenders.

The US media tends to adopt the Israeli viewpoint of the conflict over the Palestinian viewpoint. The stereotyped image of Palestinians affects the perceptions of public opinion and policy makers towards the conflict. During the Cold War, Israel was seen as a strategic ally for the US. Thus, the news media coverage of the conflict favored Israel. Palestinian national identity was erased from the map (Kamalipour, 1997, 38). Palestinians were labeled either as Palestinian Arabs, or as refugees with no national identity. For the US mainstream media, Israel's violent actions were acceptable, but Palestinian reactions were not. During the 1967 War, Israel's illegal occupation of the Palestinian Territories was justified through Israel's right to self-defense (Hammond, 2016). However, during the 1970's, the US media attention focused on PLO violence, and this led to the delegitimization of the national struggle of the PLO in the eyes of the American public (Gilmour, 2016). During and after the First Palestinian Intifada, media coverage of Palestinians in the US media became less negative (Elmasry, 2009, 6). In addition,

the US media coverage of Israel remained positive, and supported the peaceful settlement of the conflict on Israeli terms. The US media supported Israeli demands for recognition and Israel's refusal to return to 1967 borders (Abu Rahmeh, 2012, 40).

3.2.2.3. Interest Group Lobbying

A wide variety of groups work to influence U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East. The Israel lobby is the most powerful ethnic lobby in the U.S. (Uslaner, 2002). US foreign policy toward the Middle East, especially the Palestine-Israeli conflict, has always favored Israel due to the influence of the Israel lobby. This influence is reflected in the special relationship between the US and Israel, which is due to religious and cultural ties (Saleh, 2011, 164). According to Mearsheimer & Walt (2007), the Israel lobby is a “loose coalition of individuals and organizations that actively works to move U.S. foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction” (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007, 5).

The Israel lobby influences policymakers. The Israel lobby consists of key components, including the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), and the Presidents' Conference, that help move American foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction. Former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon once told an American audience: “When people ask me how they can help Israel, I tell them, 'Help AIPAC’” (McCormick, 2012, 98). This shows that AIPAC is the most effective interest group in serving Israel's interests.

The domination of American foreign policy toward the Middle East by AIPAC and the Israel Lobby as a whole is gained through different activities, including donating money to candidates, lobbying elected officials in the Executive and Legislative branches, voting in

elections, and molding public opinion by manipulating the media (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006, 41). The Israel lobby is the most powerful lobby in Washington and thus candidates running for office must demonstrate they are pro-Israel to win the Jewish and increasingly, the Christian vote. As Palmer (2007) said: “Pro-Israeli candidates were supported at all levels of American government, and the opponents of Israel were targeted for defeat” (Palmer, 2007, 237). This reflects Israel Lobby’s power in American politics. In addition to pro-Israel candidates, Christian Zionist candidates are another source of the lobby’s power, especially in Congress (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006, 42).

The Israel lobby succeeds in making US foreign policy a pro-Israel. During the Clinton Administration, a period which can be described as an active and unique period in the history of US interference in the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, the Israel lobby played an influential role (Kiely, 2017, 2). This was reflected in the number of pro-Israel officials who were among President Clinton’s closest advisors. During the Clinton administration, AIPAC was the main architect of US foreign policy toward the Middle East, especially the Palestine-Israeli conflict. As Austin (2006) said: “The four-person team in charge of setting the Clinton Administration’s Middle East policy was all made up of members of AIPAC’s policy division” (Austin, 2006). President Clinton’s biased decisions towards Israel were influenced by his pro-Israel advisors. Such ties to Israel raised serious questions about America’s ability to act as an honest broker. Martyn Indyk was a former deputy research director at AIPAC. Indyk supported the Oslo peace process and the creation of an independent Palestinian state, within the limits of what would be acceptable to Israel (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006, 44). In addition, the Clinton administration was unable to pressure Israel to stop expanding settlements on Palestinian land due to the lobby’s pressure (Mearsheimer, 2008, 147).

The lobby's impact on the Oslo Peace Process was effected by coordinating negotiation positions between the US and Israel. AIPAC also had an unchallenged hold on the US Congress. This was reflected in the number of pro-Israel laws and resolutions that were lobbied by AIPAC, including the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 (Rynhold, 2015, 109). Moreover, the lobby's ambition was to make Israel the dominant regional power. This was reflected in the Oslo peace process which was in Israel's interest through the economic and security integration of Israel into the Middle East region (Al-Rousan, 2013, 211).

This chapter has attempted to analyze the main determinants of US foreign policy and discusses the decision making process towards Palestine before 9/11. It discussed that the making of American foreign policy is very complex because of its many participants. Different determinants either domestic or international played an influential role in shaping U.S. foreign policy towards Palestine before 9/11. It provided a clear understanding of the main factors that affected the decision making process towards Palestine before 9/11. It is clear that Israel has always been a strategic ally for the U.S. in the Middle East. Thus, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is viewed from an Israeli lens. It showed that the U.S. was concerned with terrorism before 9/11. During and after the Cold War, successive US administrations failed to find a comprehensive settlement to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The next chapter will discuss the main determinants of US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11.

CHAPTER FOUR:

DETERMINANTS OF US FOREIGN POLICY AFTER 9/11

This chapter defines the main determinants of US foreign policy and discusses the decision making process towards Palestine after 9/11, how foreign policy decisions are being made in the US, and by whom. This chapter will provide a clear understanding of the main factors that affect the decision making process towards Palestine after 9/11, and explain the justifications of decisions taken by policy-makers towards Palestine.

US foreign policy is very complex because it is shaped by both international and domestic factors. Numerous actors inside and outside the state work to affect it. These determinants shape US foreign policy toward the Middle East in general and Palestine in particular. The following is an overview of domestic and international determinants that combine to shape US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11.

4.1. International Determinants

Different international determinants shaped US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11, including the structure of the international system, and national interests.

4.1.1. The Structure of the International System

Following the 9/11 attacks, the US continued to be a world hegemon in a unipolar world. The U.S. aimed to maintain its hegemonic status and prevent regional instability through waging the War on Terror. Bush's warning that you are "either with us or with the terrorists" was a clear declaration of U.S. supremacy in the region. For the US, Israel's actions against the Palestinians were part of confronting terrorism. As Hadar (2008) said: "Israel was subjected to Palestinian terrorist attacks during the second intifada, and was considered a strategic ally of the United States in the war on terrorism and against rogue Middle Eastern regimes" (Hadar, 2008, 542).

By launching the Road Map Plan for peace, the Bush administration supported the establishment of Palestinian statehood, but democratization and fighting terrorism were pre-conditions for achieving this. Still, the Bush administration backed Israel's aggressive policies toward the Palestinians, including Operation Defensive Shield of 2002 (Kaussler & Hastedt, 2017, 51). This shows that the plan was made for Israel's benefits. The Bush administration pressured the Palestinians to promote democracy, and fight terrorism. But, no effort was made to stop Israel's illegal policies in the Occupied Territories. The Bush administration's viewpoint was based on the idea that Palestinian violence was the source of all problems.

4.1.2. National Interests

The US increased its presence in the Middle East after 9/11 to protect its national interests. US foreign policy was driven by these national interests in the region. Several national interests shaped U.S. foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11, including securing strategic access to oil, ensuring the security of Israel, countering terrorism, and promoting democracy.

4.1.2.1. Access to Oil

After the 9/11 attacks, Middle Eastern oil became more crucial to America's hegemony. The U.S. war on terrorism was used as a tool to gain the global acceptance of America's hegemony. As Stetter (2012) said: "The 2003 Iraq war was a way of smashing resistance to US hegemony while consolidating the United States' grip over the Middle Eastern oil supplies needed by its economic competitors" (Stetter, 2012, 32). This means that America's war on terrorism was a way to maintain its hegemonic status, and safeguard access to cheap oil. Iraq is home to the world's second largest reserve of oil, so it holds key to stability in the region. The invasion of Iraq and the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime was about big profits for Anglo-American oil companies. Accordingly, Ahmed (2014) argued that the real issue is described in a 2001 report on "energy security," in which the threat posed by Iraq is the source of global vulnerability. The report illustrated that "US officials had lost faith in Saddam due to his erratic and unpredictable energy export policies" (Ahmed, 2014). Iraq was a destabilizing influence to the flow of oil to world markets. Thus, the invasion of Iraq was meant to stabilize global energy supplies by ensuring the free flow of Iraqi oil to world markets. The U.S. was afraid of impending global energy crisis that would increase global vulnerability and energy price volatility. It was the expansion of an "American empire."

In addition, US control over Iraq's oil was consistent with Israel's security in the Middle East. As Noreng (2006) said: "For the United States, getting rid of the Saddam regime in order to gain physical control of Iraq to secure access to oil and markets, as well as military bases to gain a foothold in the Middle East and secure Israel, seem to have been the major preoccupations"

(Noreng, 2006, xxxvii). Iraq's oil revenues would help improve Iraq according to the "American model of democracy" and thus eliminate the possible recur of past Iraqi threats against Israel.

Israel emerged as a partner for the U.S. in fighting terrorism. The U.S. supported Israel against "Palestinian anti-democratic terrorist groups." The Bush administration did not see Israel as equally responsible for the violence and the failure to achieve peace. The Bush administration pursued Israel's security through asking the Palestinians to reform the Palestinian Authority, get rid of Arafat and fight extremism. These were preconditions for the Palestinians to achieve their independent statehood. On the other hand, the Bush administration did not condemn Israel's violence; rather it recognized Israel's right to defend itself against "Palestinian terrorism" (Abrams, 2013, 42). The U.S. cared about solving the Palestine-Israeli conflict to maintain stability in the region. This was reflected in President Bush's Road Map for Peace in 2003 to solve the conflict on the basis of a two-state solution. However, Bush's plan failed to solve the conflict because it downplayed Palestinians' national rights, it failed to pressure Israel to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian Territories, and it failed to solve the final status issues, including borders, Jerusalem, the refugees, and the Israeli settlements (Mohamad, 2015, 80). Israel's security was a concern for the Bush administration after Hamas's victory in the 2006 elections. Thus, the Bush administration decided to cut aid to the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority unless it agreed to renounce terrorism and recognize Israel (Hilal, 2013).

4.1.2.2. Security of Israel

The new vision of the Middle East was in Israel's interest. Israel has become secure of external threats. American democracy promotion was a mean to encourage more cooperation and peaceful relations between Israel and the Arab countries. As Hamdi (2018) said: "During this era (2001-2008), the U.S. policies aimed at pushing the Arab countries into many negotiations with Israel, based on the process of normalization in all fields. Therefore, this process covered future economic and security arrangements, arms control, regional security, economic cooperation, water, and environmental and refugees' issues" (Hamdi, 2018, 263). The U.S. adopted democracy promotion as a strategy to serve American national interests in the Middle East, including the security of Israel. For example, Saddam Hussein's regime constituted a major security threat to Israel. That is why the US occupied Iraq and got rid of him.

After the 9/11 attacks, America and Israel were united as "victims of terrorism." The special relationship between the U.S. and Israel became stronger. Israel was a strategic partner in fighting terrorism. As Waxer (2013) said: "After the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, the administration began once again to see Israel as a strategic partner against a common foe—instead of the Soviet Union, it was now terrorism" (Waxer, 2013, 23). This was reflected in the Bush administration's support for Israel's violent confrontations with the Palestinians both during the Second Palestinian Intifada and during Operation Cast Lead in 2008. The Bush administration allowed Israel to handle Palestinian violence as it saw fit. Under Bush's agenda of unilateralism and promoting democracy, the U.S. ensured that Israel's security would be achieved if the Palestinians ever became democratic. In this vein, Bush led the Road Map for Peace plan to solve the Palestine-Israeli conflict.

4.1.2.3. Counter-Terrorism

Since September 11, the U.S. has been involved in a global war on terror mainly in the Middle East. The attacks on the U.S. affected its foreign policy toward the Middle East in general and Palestine in particular. Fighting terrorism became the cornerstone of American foreign policy to maintain hegemony in the region. In his National Security Strategy of 2002, Bush believed that in order to achieve global security, terrorism should be defeated and democracy should be promoted. As Demant & Finguerut (2015) said: “Bush’s strategy was immensely ambitious. He believed that victory in the war against terror would come when America’s enemies would be transformed in democracies” (Demant & Finguerut, 2015, 448). Terrorism was thus connected to the absence of democracy. The U.S. always needs a new enemy to maintain its hegemonic status in the world. Islam was the “new enemy” of the U.S. and the new threat to U.S. national security. By doing so, the U.S. made Islam a substitute for communism. U.S. invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan following the 9/11 attacks reflected the “clash of civilization” between Islam and the West.

With regard to the Palestine-Israeli conflict, Israel was America’s most important friend in fighting terrorism. From Israel’s perspective, Al-Qaeda actions against the U.S. were the same as the Palestinian resistance actions against Israel. As Hamdi (2018) said: “In the post 9/11 period, Israel succeeded in bringing the Palestinian resistance to the core of the international campaign against terrorism.” (Hamdi, 2018, 264). Israel succeeded in winning the world’s sympathy for that. The Bush administration supported Israel’s aggressive policies in the Occupied Territories with military supplies. This American support provided a cover for Israel to violate the rights of Palestinians. For Bush, Israel’s security would be achieved only through promoting democracy. Thus, Bush asked the Palestinians to reform the Palestinian Authority to

achieve their independent statehood. According to Hamdi (2018): “Bush’s vision was to establish a Palestinian state that was territorial, sovereign and governed by democratic institutions” (ibid). This position aimed at achieving Israel’s security. Bush’s plan to solve the Palestine-Israeli conflict based on the two-state solution was a cover to let Israel blame the Palestinians for the failure of peace.

4.1.2.4. Democratization

The Bush administration claimed that the absence of democracy led to Islamic terrorism. Democracy promotion became a strategic tool of U.S. foreign policy to counterterrorism. Efforts were made by the U.S. to deal with the root causes. U.S. officials found that democracy was the best way to counterterrorism. As Udayangani (2016) said: “Democracy promotion is thus presented as an intrinsic, even central, element of the US war on terrorism” (Udayangani, 2016, 10). The US increased its foreign aid to reform non-democratic governments in the Middle East, because it is central to the war on terror. The Bush administration created many democracy promotion programs to support positive change, including the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) in 2002, and the Millennium Challenge Cooperation (MCC) in 2004, which emphasized economic, political, and cultural, social reforms. These programs were implemented by many governmental and non-governmental organizations, including the USAID (Lawson, 2017). Democracy promotion was supposed to become more central in political participation and diplomatic representatives.

Democracy promotion was necessary to safeguard American national interests, including the security of Israel. Democratic Iraq would serve as a role model to other countries in the region. Authoritarian regimes have long been supported by the US, including Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. However, democracy promotion became an important national security goal to maintain

peace and stability in the region. According to Fürtig (2009), “The theorem of “Democratic Peace” stipulates that democracies refrain from waging war on one another. Therefore, according to this theorem, the best way to combat terrorism in the long run would be to democratize the Middle East” (Fürtig, 2009, 11). Building democratic Arab states would allow for cooperation and peaceful initiatives between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Democratization would deprive terrorist groups of their political basis, and their conflict with the West would be a non-violent one. U.S. policy-makers emphasized how the violation of human rights, such as the political exclusion by repressive regimes provided fertile ground for the adoption of Islamic methods. Thus, it was a “war of ideas,” in which the U.S. would work to reverse the spread of extremist ideology in the region.

The U.S. supported free elections in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. For the US, the corruption and authoritarianism provided fertile ground for terrorism against Israel. As Turner (2006) said: “The US and Israel maintain that the second Intifada was the result of corruption and authoritarianism in the PA, not Israeli actions or the deteriorating socio-economic situation in the WBG” (Turner, 2006, 746). For the US, internal reform was necessary for building democracy in the Occupied Territories. But it was not necessary for building an independent Palestinian state. The slogan of the Road Map was “democracy now, peace later,” shows that the U.S. was concerned with democratizing the Palestinian Authority to meet Israel’s interests, than maintaining peace and building an independent Palestinian state. The Road Map was not clear about the borders of the Palestinian state. As Farsakh (2005) argued that the Road Map is vague, because it calls for establishing a Palestinian state, without identifying its borders; whether the 1967 borders, or anything else (Farsakh, 2005, 178). This gives Israel the upper hand in serving its interests. Israel continued to impose policies that are at odds with having an independent

Palestinian state, including the security cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, control over the Palestinian economy, the building of the Apartheid Wall, the expansion of Jewish settlements, Jerusalem, and the refugees. All these final status issues were reserved to negotiated resolution between Israel and the Palestinians. The Palestinians had fulfilled some of their obligations, and they were tied to Israel's security concerns.

U.S. democracy promotion is contradictory in the Palestine-Israeli conflict. The U.S. allowed Hamas to participate in the Palestinian Legislative Council in 2006. However, the victory of Hamas was rejected by the US. Unfortunately, the U.S. who had insisted on the importance of conducting free and fair elections, opposed the results of these elections. As Mousavi (2011) said: "It seems that American hesitation and half-measures about democracy promotion can be explained by two reasons. The first reason is that democracy promotion results may be unfavorable to Washington and may not be in concert with America's preferences" (Mousavi, 2011, 118). The U.S. who had stressed on the importance of civil society empowerment and the ability of individuals to express their opinion, did not respect Palestinians' democratic choice. The Bush administration did not recognize the victory of Hamas, because the later does not recognize Israel. The U.S. ignorance of Hamas's victory underestimated Bush's "Freedom Agenda," and proved U.S. double-standard policy.

4.2. Domestic Determinants

U.S. foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11, is shaped by different domestic determinants. These domestic determinants can be divided into two types: Formal Domestic Determinants and Informal Domestic Determinants.

4.2.1. Formal Domestic Determinants

Under the US Constitution, both the Executive branch (the President) and the Legislative branch (Congress) have the power and the legal authority to make the US foreign policy. The following is an overview of the important roles played by both the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch.

4.2.1.1. The President

After 9/11, the US became more supportive of Israel because they both believed they were in a similar struggle against terrorism. Thus, the holy land had become part of the global war on terror. President George W. Bush was the first American president to endorse an independent Palestinian state. As Bush stated in his 2002 National Security Strategy: "If Palestinians embrace democracy, confront corruption and firmly reject terror, they can count on American support for the creation of a Palestinian State" (Bush, 2002). This shows that Bush recognized the Palestinian right to self-determination but he required fighting terrorism and the democratization of the political system as a precondition for having this right. By doing so, Bush shifted the focus from Israeli occupation to domestic Palestinian politics (Yaghi, 2007, 171). This policy provided a cover for Israel to increase its illegal actions against the Palestinians. Further, Bush decided to renew the stalled peace process through outlining the Road Map for Peace to solve the Palestine-Israeli conflict. However, this peace process was a one sided vision: it asked everything from the Palestinian government, but asked nothing from the Israeli government (Mohammad, 2015, 82). Thus, it failed to solve the conflict, and exert pressure on Israel to stop the expansion of its illegal settlements and to withdraw from the occupied territories.

Different factors combined to shape George Bush's foreign policy towards the conflict. The traditional frame of reference affected Bush's policy. As Azar (2011) said: "As Bush came to office, the Bush administration sided with Sharon to strangle the Palestinian national movement under occupation and label it terrorism" (Azar, 2011, 40). This shows that Bush was influenced by anti-Palestinian bias and mindset through blaming the Palestinians for the violence, and the collapse of the peace process, without understanding Palestinian grievances and perspectives. Further, Bush's policy towards Palestine was influenced by the neo-conservative approach, in the name of religion. This was shown through Bush's unlimited support for Israel against the Palestinians. As Hilal (2013) said: "Indeed, the neo-conservatives in the administration have also urged Bush to grant Israel all the freedom it needs to combat Palestinian violence" (Hilal, 2013). Bush's biblical beliefs were reinforced by his neoconservative's advisers who were pro-Israeli, including his Secretary of State, Colin Powell, they sought to give the Israeli government a free hand to suppress the Palestinians during the Second Intifada, and considered Arafat a terrorist equivalent to Bin Laden (Ryan, 2010).

4.2.1.2. Congress

After 9/11, fighting terrorism has become the top national priority for the US with the full support of the Congress. Lawmakers felt they had a national duty to stand behind the President in his "war against terrorism." U.S. Congress played a significant role in combating international terrorism by passing resolutions, bills, and acts. In response to the terrorist attacks, Congress passed a resolution called the Authorization for the Use of Force (AUMF) in 2001, which authorized President Bush to "use all necessary military force against terrorists." This resolution allowed the US to invade Iraq and Afghanistan to prevent future attacks against the US. As

Zoughbie (2014) said: “Based on flawed intelligence, Congress granted the president the authority to go to war, and the neoconservative House Majority Leader Tom Delay enthusiastically promised that “whatever the president deems necessary to fight would be granted” (Zoighbie, 2014, 59). It was essential for the U.S. to show unity in a time of crisis. In addition, Congress passed the Patriot Act in 2001 to find terrorists and those who financed them. The Patriot Act was a vital weapon against terrorism.

After 9/11, Congressional attention to Israel increased sharply due to the shared battle against terrorism. Congress passed many resolutions pressing support for Israeli actions in the Occupied Territories. In 2003, Congress passed the FY 2003 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, included \$9 billion for Israel’s economic recovery, to finance the Israeli efforts against the Palestinian Intifada (Mark, 2005, 5). Congress was controlled by Zionist neoconservatives and conservatives who were able to shift the congressional decisions in a pro-Israeli direction. For example, House Majority Leader Dick Arme y held a view of the Palestine-Israeli conflict that “Israel should grab the entire West Bank ” and that the Palestinians should move to neighboring Arab countries (Zoughbie, 2014, 36). This view shows the centrality of Israel in foreign policy. With regard to terrorist financing, Congress restricted direct aid to the PA in 2003, because they were concerned that this money would be used to finance terrorist activities against Israel.

After 9/11, AIPAC continued to ensure Israel’s security through lobbying Congress. As Mearsheimer & Walt (2006) said: “On November 16, eighty-nine senators sent Bush a letter praising him for refusing to meet with Arafat, but also demanding that the United States not restrain Israel from retaliating against the Palestinians and insisting that the administration state publicly that it stood steadfastly behind Israel” (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006, 51). This shows that

by working with Congress, AIPAC sought to ensure Israel's security and interests through isolating President Yasser Arafat, because they considered him a terrorist. With regard to the Road Map, the Zionist lobby backed Sharon's expansionist goals in the Occupied Territories. As Petras (2011) argued that after Bush's efforts in mediating the Palestine-Israeli peace process through the Road Map, the Zionist lobby turned Bush and Congress into political idiots through backing Sharon's expansionist plan (Petras, 2011).

4.2.2. Informal Domestic Determinants

The foreign policy of the United States is also influenced by non-governmental actors. The following is an overview of the role of these non-governmental actors in shaping the US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11.

4.2.2.1. Public Opinion

After 9/11, public views of Muslims and Islam have grown negatively. The perception of Muslims as a cultural threat is due to media stereotyping of Islam. Americans believed that they were involved in a clash of civilizations; the West versus Islam. As Mekhoukh (2013) argued about the media, "being strongly influenced, it has played an effective, but mainly negative role in shaping the American perception of Islam and Muslims after 9/11" (Mekhoukh, 2013). This negative stereotypical of Muslims and Arabs in U.S. media led the American public to support Bush's Freedom Agenda in the Middle East, such as the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan to spread "freedom and democracy." It is very clear that these goals have not been achieved.

American public support for Israel increased immediately after 9/11. The Gallup Poll found that American support for Israel was at its highest rate, due to Israel's strategic importance

to the U.S. As Jones (2001) said: “A majority of Americans (55%) in the September 14-15 poll say their sympathies in the Middle East situation lie more with the Israelis than with the Palestinian Arabs, while 7% take the opposite view” (Jones, 2001). Americans continued to support Israel following the 9/11 attacks and the fall of the peace talks. The Gallup Poll found that in October 2000, 41% of Americans sympathized with Israel, while 11% of Americans sympathized with Palestinians. However, the Gallup Poll found that in June 2002, 49% of Americans sympathized with Israel, while 13% of Americans sympathized with Palestinians (Carroll & Newport, 2006). The rise in sympathy for Israel was due to Americans tendency to believe that Palestinians were more culpable for the collapse of the Oslo Accords.

Following the 9/11 attacks, Palestinians were viewed more negatively by the American public due to media coverage. Images of Palestinians celebrating the 9/11 attacks undermined US public opinion of the Palestinians (Exoo, 2010, 45). Americans support for Israel was at its highest rate since the 1991 Gulf War. A Gallup Poll conducted in February 2003, found that 58% of Americans sympathized with Israel, while 13% sympathized with Palestinians (Gallup, 2004, 70). This increased sympathy for Israel was due to its strategic importance especially in the Iraq War. However, Palestinians were perceived as mainly to blame for the failure of peace talks and lack of conflict resolution. Americans felt that both the US and Israel were fighting the same war against terrorism. Religion plays an important role in shaping American public opinion towards the conflict. 70% of Americans are Christians and they believe in the Jews’ right of return (Cavari, 2014, 7). Thus, the American public tends to support Israel over the Palestinians.

4.2.2.2. The Media

After 9/11, stereotypic treatment of Arabs and Muslims was reinforced by U.S. media. Arabs and Muslims were portrayed as terrorists, violent and barbaric. The US represents civilization, while Islam represents barbarism. As Pintak (2006) said: “the U.S. media immediately fell back on the prevailing—and stereotyped—narrative about Arabs and Muslims and reverted to its historic tendency to present the world, in Henry Kissinger’s words, as ‘a morality play between good and evil’” (Pintak, 2006, 39). This deepening tension and hostility between the US and the Muslim world is a result of US media portrayal of Muslims and Islam. Islamophobia has become the mainstream discourse in U.S. media. This clash of civilization is a result of President Bush’s speech; “you are either with us, or against us.” In this speech, the enemy was created and was described as evil, brutal, and violent. It was a struggle of good “us” versus evil “them.” U.S. media rallied behind their president and they started using terms such as “us” and “them,” they linked the terrorist acts with Islam. This implies that all Muslims are “bad” unless they proved their loyalty to America.

Following the 9/11 attacks, Palestinians were portrayed negatively, while Israelis were portrayed positively in U.S. media. Israelis were the victims, while Palestinians were the aggressors. Recognition of Palestinian humanity was rare. During the Second Palestinian Intifada, the US mainstream media was one-sided; suicide bombings were the headlines, while Israel’s violent attacks were ignored. The US media adopted the Israeli viewpoint of the conflict. As Keramati (2008) said: “At times the information given about them was inaccurate. Other times the media contrasted Palestinian action with the great reflections given to Israel” (Keramati, 2008, 148). For U.S. media, when Palestinians killed Israeli civilians, they were

terrorists, while when Israelis killed Palestinian civilians, they were soldiers. The media did not show that Palestinians and Israelis were equally responsible for the conflict.

Policies and actions were influenced by perceptions. The framing of Palestinians in the media played a significant role in how US policymakers understand Palestinian claims. As Ross (2003) said: “The image presented by the editorials is that the entire Palestinian population consists of suicide bombers. The typical Palestinian is a conflagration of hate, a plague of death, a suicide cult, and a puppet spouting anti-American and anti-Israeli vitriol” (Ross, 2003, 62). Violence and terror were stereotypical Palestinian behaviors. The *New York Times* was one American newspaper involved in media bias in reporting numbers of deaths. During Operation Cast Lead in 2008-2009, the New York Times coverage was biased toward Israel. As Caballero (2010) said: “Although Palestinians died at a rate 106 times more than Israelis, the *New York Times* engaged in a practice of media bias that resulted in coverage of only 3% of Palestinian deaths in the headlines and first paragraphs” (Caballero, 2010, iv). This shows that media bias affects the news coverage of the Palestine-Israeli conflict. The US media tends to distort the facts of the conflict to show Israel in a favorable light.

Following the 9/11 attacks, the US mainstream media were influenced by different factors, including culture, and the Israeli lobby. The shared culture between the US and Israel is a major factor explaining bias in favor of Israel. As Saariaho (2015) said: “The one important factor is the cultural proximity of Israel to the West, especially to the American culture. As a result, the American public identifies with the Israelis” (Saariaho, 2015, 8). This cultural bias was reflected in the US media through presenting Israelis as victims, democratic and civilized, while Palestinians were violent terrorists, and backward. Thus, the US media ignored Israeli abuses of Palestinians and focused on Palestinian violence.

The Israeli Lobby played an influential role in shaping media coverage of the Palestine-Israeli conflict after 9/11. The lobby worked hard to shape American public opinion in a positive way about Israel. American commentators were and are usually pro-Israel (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006, 20). Following the 9/11 attacks, the lobby argued that Israel and the US are partners in the War on Terror (Marrar, 2008, 11). This media coverage was intended to justify what it regarded as Israel's right to self-defense against Palestinian violence. Moreover, major media outlets including CNN, Fox News, ABC, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journals*, and the *Washington Post* were under pressure from the Zionist lobby to adopt the Israeli viewpoint (Umar, 2008).

4.2.2.3. Interest Group Lobbying

AIPAC and the Israel lobby as a whole succeeded in placing Israel's interests at the top of US foreign policy agenda following the 9/11 attacks. This goal was served by the existence of pro-Israel individuals in the Bush administration, including Elliot Abrams and John Bolton, who pushed pro-Israel policies (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006, 45). The Israel lobby worked to convince the Bush administration and the American people that the US and Israel had a shared enemy. As Mearsheimer & Walt (2006) said: "Israeli officials and lobby representatives repeatedly emphasized that there was no real difference between Arafat and Osama bin Laden, insisting that the United States and Israel should isolate the Palestinians' elected leader and have nothing to do with him" (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006, 51). The Israel lobby succeeded in making Israel a strategic ally for the US in fighting terrorism. The 9/11 attacks helped the Israel lobby equate the Palestinian violence with Al-Qaeda terrorism. This comparison was meant to prevent the Bush administration from criticizing Israel's policies toward the Palestinians. In addition, the Israel

lobby put pressure on Bush to change key words in the Road Map of 2003 to fit with Israel's wishes, including changing the term "Palestinian state" into democratic, or peaceful, with no mention of independent (Barnes, 2017, 35).

After 9/11, Congress was heavily influenced by the Israel lobby in a pro-Israel direction. As Findley (2003) said: "Even as evidence of worldwide outrage against U.S. complicity with Israel's assault on the West Bank Gaza mounted, a large majority of members of both the House of Representatives and the Senate remained beholden to AIPAC (Findley, 2003, 350). AIPAC's influence on Congress remained strong through supporting Israeli aggressors and blaming Palestinian victims. In addition, President Bush received a message by 89 senators asking him to refuse to meet with Arafat. They did not question Israel's policies toward the Palestinians. As a result, the US-Israeli relationship had improved considerably since 9/11 (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006, 52).

This chapter has attempted to analyze the main determinants of US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11. It argued that American foreign policy, goals, and interests towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict did not change. The Bush administration failed to find a comprehensive settlement to the conflict, and the US position regarding the two-state solution ignored the national rights of the Palestinian people and maintained Israel's security. Thus, there was a connection between the War on Terrorism and the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Bush administration's goal was "democracy now, peace later."

The next chapter will discuss in more details the US foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11.

CHAPTER FIVE:

US FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS PALESTINE AFTER 9/11

This chapter has attempted to analyze the reasons behind the Bush administration's decision to offer recognition to an independent Palestinian state. It will discuss under what conditions would a strategic and "realist" American foreign policy elite make such a substantial change in policy that on its surface appears so favorable to Palestinians.

Following the 9/11 attacks, the US continued to face challenges to protect its hegemonic status and national interests in the Middle East and globally. Regionally, these challenges were terrorism and managing the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. As Robel (2014) said: "The challenges of Bush administration's Middle East policy were terrorism, promoting Arab Israel peace." (Robel, 2014, 29). The Bush administration viewed the Middle East as the "base camp" for threats to US national security and stability. US policymakers enacted a series of policies deemed necessary to safeguard American national interests in the region. These fundamental national interests remained unchanged: securing access to oil, ensuring the security of Israel, fighting terrorism, and promoting democracy. In order to protect these national interests, and implement their policies, US policymakers employed a realist perspective to promote the goal of regional stability. Foreign policy officials designed policies to tackle the root causes of terrorism, and thus manage and reshape the Middle East according to American interests. As Jervis (2003) argues, the US, serving as the only responsible superpower in the world, must maintain its hegemony through spreading democracy and modernity and acting in ways others cannot and

must not (Jervis, 2003). For the Bush administration, influencing domestic political structures in the region's states through a variety of means became a US security necessity in the war against terrorism, especially after the shocking events of 9/11. American policies ranged from repressive to supportive, and officials believed promoting democracy – through both “top-down” regime change and “bottom-up” civil society building efforts – would help stabilize the region and draw excluded and disadvantaged groups away from extremism and toward peaceful participation.

The US aimed to change the status-quo to promote regional stability and security. The US linked regional stability to the reform of national political processes. As Yacoubian (2008) argues, absent such change, the continuity of the status-quo would provide further ground for extremism (Yacoubian, 2008). Regime change and democracy promotion became a top priority in US foreign policy to promote regional stability and maintain American hegemony. For the Bush administration, democratization was the solution to terrorism and extremism. This radical shift reflects that American foreign policy is flexible to respond to changes in facts on the ground and as national interest dictates.

US-Israeli relations grew closer after the 9/11 attacks. The US renewed support for Israel to promote regional stability and safeguard American interests. The US treated Israel as its most important strategic ally in the war against terrorism. As Troy (2012) argues, 9/11 was a crucial step in Israel's efforts to gain strong American support for IOF incursions into the Occupied Territories. US officials believed that the US and Israel faced common threats from common enemies. The Bush administration assumed an unquestioned tolerance of the illegal Israeli actions against the Palestinians. Accordingly, Shlaim (2003) argues that the Bush administration not only supported Sharon's claim of linking the Palestinian Authority and its leader Arafat to terrorism, but participated in marginalizing Arafat (Shlaim, 2003). Furthermore, Bush considered

Sharon as a “man of peace” and Arafat as an “obstacle to peace.” The Bush administration further tilted the balance towards Israel.

American’s unlimited support for Israel at the expense of the Palestinians, increased anti-Americanism in the Middle East. The US decided to try again to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to gain Arab support for the war against terrorism. As Durrani (2002) argued, “But this had a counter-effect as Sharon's escalation against the Palestinians was perceived in the US as "a damaging diversion from the response being prepared" to nab the September 11 perpetrators and, thus, detrimental to obtaining the crucial support of Arab and Muslim countries for the US-led anti-terror coalition.” (Durrani, 2002, 40). The Palestinian-Israeli conflict posed a serious threat to American national interests Bush officials believed, because it fueled anti-American Islamic terrorism and extremism. Resolving the conflict became a primary goal of the Bush administration to promote stability and safeguard American national interests in the region. Freedman (2005) argues that during his first months in office, President George W. Bush opposed expanding US involvement in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Bush administration did not want to repeat the failure of Clinton’s efforts and thus weaken the American position in the region. As Secretary of State Powell said: “The United States stands ready to assist, not insist.” The US did not force peace, but would only offer to facilitate the peace process. However, the Bush administration changed this “hands-off” policy towards the conflict and sought to launch a major initiative due to the 9/11 attacks (Freedman, 2005). In order to maintain its hegemonic status in the region, the US sought to involve itself more fully in the peace process between Palestinians and Israelis.

For the Bush administration, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was a motivator for terrorism and the root cause of all conflicts in the Middle East. Resolving the conflict was necessary for

regional stability, and for the security of Israel. As Schmemmann (2001) argues, following the 9/11 attacks, the US was subject to criticism from its closest allies in the region due to its failure to end the violence between Palestinians and Israelis. Resuming an active role in mediating the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was imperative to achieve US objectives. This also brought the conflict back to the forefront at the United Nations. Because of the bloody conflict, Bush supported the creation of an independent Palestinian state on November 10, 2001 as called for in the Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, the approach known as “land for peace.” (Schmemmann, 2001).

US policymakers developed statements of support for a “two-state solution” in the conflict. As Quandt (2010) argues, Powell’s rational view was that the US would need the support of Arab and Muslim states in the war against terrorism. In order to gain this broad coalition, he believed the US should do more to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (Quandt, 2010). Resolving the conflict was in America’s interest to lessen Arab’s anger at the US. Bush followed Powell’s view by pursuing a policy designed to give Palestinians some hope in achieving their independent state in the West Bank and Gaza. Christison (2004) notes that following the 9/11 attacks, President Bush issued the strongest statement endorsing the idea of establishing an independent Palestinian state. In a speech at the United Nations on November 10, 2001, Bush announced that: “We are working for the day when two states--Israel and Palestine – live peacefully together within secure and recognized boundaries.” Furthermore, Powell called for an end to Israel’s occupation. In a speech at the University of Louisville on November 19, 2001 Powell said: “Israel must be willing to end its occupation and accept a viable Palestinian state.” (Powell, 2001). This was the first time an American president recognized the Palestinian right to self-determination, and had formally used the terms “Palestine” and “Israel’s

occupation.” (Christison, 2004). Accordingly, Vulliamy (2001) argues that this shift in US foreign policy reflected a new US commitment to an independent Palestinian state. As part of this commitment, the Bush administration pressed Sharon to establish a cease-fire and allow Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to meet with Arafat, despite the fact that violence had not ended yet. Directly following his speech on November 19, 2001, Powell sent his Former Marine General Anthony Zinni to meet with Israelis and Palestinian delegations to reach a ceasefire that would get the peace process back on track (Vulliamy, 2001).

Thus, in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the Palestinian state was formally affirmed as a US goal. Zoughbi (2014) emphasizes that Palestine in fact was a laboratory for the entire region, in that democracy should be promoted first through the Palestinian Authority. As the Second Palestinian intifada was destabilizing the Middle East, US policymakers in June, 2002, including Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice advised Bush to deliver a “game-changing” speech on Palestine (Zoughbi, 2014). Furthermore, Rice took the lead in conceptualizing this presidential speech, in which Bush would call for the establishment of Palestinian state with provisional borders and democratic leadership not compromised by terror. As a result, on June 24, 2002, Bush laid out his vision for peace in the Middle East by saying that the US would support the creation of “a peaceful and democratic Palestinian state alongside Israel.” (Bush, 2002). In this heavily pro-Israel speech, Bush called for a “provisional” Palestinian state with a democratic leadership not compromised by terror. Bumiller & Sanger (2002) argues that Bush’s speech was in fact tough on the Palestinians, and it was intended to end the violence between Palestinians and Israelis. It was the first time the US made the replacement of Arafat into a precondition for the creation of a Palestinian state. Bush warned the Palestinians that their state “will never be created by terror.” The removal of Arafat and the election of a new and different Palestinian

leadership became the price for a Palestinian state (Bumiller & Sanger, 2002). In the Bush's "freedom agenda," democracy and freedom were presented as the only ways to win the war on terrorism. Obviously, greatly enhanced security state capacities in the US, Israel, Palestine, and around the world would play a crucial role as well.

As a democratically-elected leader, Arafat was marginalized and delegitimized by the Bush administration. Rice insisted that Arafat and his entire leadership did have to go if there would be peace in the Middle East, to protect the Palestinians' right to self-determination, and to get the Palestinian people the leadership they deserve. The foundation of the Palestinian state must be transparent, democratic, and anti-terror. In her interview on *Fox News Sunday* on May 5, 2002, Rice said: "We are not going to try to choose the leadership for the Palestinian people. Chairman Arafat is there ... but he does have responsibilities that he has not been meeting and we are going to press him" (Rice, 2002). Bush was convinced by the idea of Palestinian reform. As a result, in his most anti-Arafat speech in June 24, 2002, Bush called for Arafat's ouster as a precondition to the creation of a provisional Palestinian state. The Bush administration offered a deal: if terrorism stopped, the US would mediate the peace process, and support the creation of a provisional Palestinian state. No peace would be achieved without denouncing terrorism. The existence of Arafat and the rest of his leadership was destabilizing the region. Democracy promotion in Palestine was necessary for regional stability. Dalacoura (2005) argues that a democratically elected Palestinian leadership would denounce violence and support peaceful talks with Israel (Dalacoura, 2005). This reform which included the creation of a Prime Minister post aimed to weaken Arafat. Bush had pointedly and repeatedly criticized Arafat and refused to meet him because there was no such thing as a "good terrorist." Sciolino & Tyler (2001) argues that this refusal was due to Arafat's unwillingness to root out terrorists and denounce violence.

Accordingly, Rice said to Arafat: “You cannot help us with al-Qaeda, and hug Hizballah or Hamas.” (Sciolino & Tyler, 2001).

As violence escalated further during January 2002, Bush’s negative portrayal of Arafat increased. With Israeli intelligence’s evidence of Arafat’s link to terrorism, Bush’s criticism of the Palestinian leader increased. Bush considered Arafat as a terrorist, not as a partner of peace. As Barnea (2006) argues that in January 2002, the discovery of the “*Karine-A*” ship demonstrated Arafat’s link to terrorism and his involvement with Iran. The *Karine-A* was carrying 50 tons of weapons from Iran. Israeli intelligence claimed that the *Karine-A* was owned by the PA, although Arafat denied any knowledge of the ship. The US warned Arafat that if he did not take necessary steps to stop violence, he would “complicate enormously” his relations with the US. The Bush administration believed that Arafat would make no real progress toward peace. (Barnea, 2006). The two-state solution would never happen with Arafat in power. The Bush administration wanted to prevent the conflict from getting worse, and focused on Arafat’s role. Rather than counting on Arafat to make changes, the Bush administration called for Arafat’s replacement. For Bush, this reform was urgent and necessary to America’s interests. This was direct US involvement in the Palestinian policy. Rice (2011) argues that Bush was less concerned about the creation of a Palestinian state, than he was concerned about “What kind of Palestinian state?” Bush wanted to protect the Palestinians’ right to self-determination both from Israel and from their own corrupt Authority (Rice, 2011, 143). Thus, it seems clear that 9/11 colored Bush’s perception of Arafat as a leader of a new Palestinian state.

Similarly, Christison (2004) argues that Bush’s call for the end of terrorism and the election of a new and different Palestinian leadership as a precondition to the creation of a provisional Palestinian state, was in Israel’s interest. Bush’s initiative to achieve a “just peace”

was acceptable to Israel, and “he again limited the initiative in response to Israel’s demands and again required that terrorism stop before there could be any movement towards peace.” Indeed, the replacement of Arafat had always been Sharon’s goal and agenda. Sharon succeeded in convincing Bush that Arafat was Israel’s Bin Laden (Christison, 2004, 39). On the other hand, Rice (2011) argues that Bush’s speech had broken a taboo by challenging the Israeli claim that “there was no Palestinian partner for peace.” (Rice, 2011, 147).

Sanger (2002) argues that following his anti-Arafat speech on June 24, 2001, Bush threatened to cut aid to the Palestinians if they did not remove Arafat and elect a new and different leadership. In the speech, Bush said: “we won’t be putting money into a society dominated by corrupt leadership that helps to finance terrorists” (Sanger, 2002). The Bush administration used foreign aid as a tool to prevent Palestinians from re-electing Arafat. Furthermore, the Bush administration strongly supported “Operation Defensive Shield” on April 3, 2002, in which Israel surrounded Arafat’s compound in Ramallah and reoccupied major cities in the West Bank. Accordingly, Rice (2011) argues that the Bush administration believed that Israel had a right to defend itself. However, on May 10, 2002, the US was in “the midst of a full-blown Middle East crisis and a deepening split with Israel” due to the Arab nations’ anger at Israel’s aggressive actions in the Occupied Territories. The crises caused by the Israeli Occupation Forces’ siege around the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, where dozens of Palestinian militants were hiding and seeking refuge. Bush was convinced by Powell’s view that Israel’s ongoing carnage against innocent Palestinians was a serious threat (Rice, 2011, 138). As a result, on April 7, 2002, Bush asked Israel to withdraw without delay from the West Bank. And on September 24, 2002, the US chose to abstain on, rather than veto a UN resolution condemning the Israeli actions in the Occupied Territories. This shift in US policy represented an

attempt to gain support for the planned invasion of Iraq, especially with the rise of anti-American feelings in the region (Barnea, 2006).

Bush's speech on June 24, 2002 formed the basis for the Road Map for Peace. This three-phase approach was launched on April 30, 2003 and was intended to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the two-state solution. The Road Map was backed by the United States, the European Union, the United Nations, and Russia. Furthermore, this plan put security ahead of a political agreement. Bennet (2003) argues that Bush's peace initiative called on Palestinians and Israelis to revive trust and "end the violence and return to a path of peace." In exchange for statehood, Palestinians must stop violence against Israel, and make democratic reforms. Israel must accept these reforms and stop all settlement activity in the Occupied Territories. The plan offered the Palestinians a state with provisional borders, and maintained Israel's security (Bennet, 2003). Palestinians needed to work in phases to achieve their independent state. Similarly, Covarrubias & Lansford (2007) argue that the Road Map for Peace was consistent with the Bush Doctrine in calling for democracy promotion and leadership reform in the Occupied Territories as a precondition for independence (Covarrubias & Lansford, 2007). Mohamad (2015) argues that the Road Map for Peace marked a shift in US foreign policy towards Palestine through backing the creation of an independent Palestinian state, for the first time in US history (Mohamad, 2015). After the invasion of Iraq on March 20, 2003, the US decided to restart the peace process between Palestinians and Israelis. Christison (2004) argues that the return of American mediation was due to pressure from the British Prime Minister Tony Blair to resolve the conflict because it was in America's interests. This was to "repay" for Blair's support in the war against Iraq. And the US's successful removal of Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq had given the US new status as a regional power (Christison, 2004).

The Bush administration was unwilling to ensure the implementation of the Road Map, although it was their greatest contribution to resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. There was no real pressure compelling the parties involved to meet guidelines. As Hallward (2011) argues, the Road Map obligations were not enforced, and the two parties failed to go beyond phase 1, which called for an end to Palestinian violence, leadership reform, and Israel's withdrawal from the Occupied Territories (Hallward, 2011). The US leadership on the Road Map was missed. After the appointment of Mahmoud Abbas as PA Prime Minister on April 29, 2003, which was conditional for peace to move forward, the Bush administration withdrew its support for the plan because the US was not serious about resolving the conflict. And "no Quartet monitoring mechanism, informal or otherwise, was ever established—not even one that clearly laid out a dominant role for the United States" (Elgindy, 2012, 12). The US was not serious about monitoring the parties' fulfillment of their obligations. The Bush administration was unwilling to implement the Road Map principles. As Mohamad (2015) argues that Bush did nothing to ensure the implementation of the Road Map principles by Israel. That was due to Bush's misunderstanding of the issues involved, his inability to pressure Sharon to freeze the construction of settlements, and domestic political pressure from pro-Israel officials (Mohamad, 2015). Similarly, Elgindy (2012) argues that the Road Map for Peace was a short-lived success because of its third phase, which did not present a single word regarding the "final status" issues, including Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, and borders, although these issues were the heart of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. There was no clarification of what the solution would look like (Elgindy, 2012).

The Road Map for Peace put the establishment of security before a final settlement. The Bush administration had focused on Palestinians to ensure their compliance with Israel's security

interests. Rynhold (2008) argues that for Israel and the US, Palestinian fulfillment of the plan's first phase was a precondition for the implementation of a peace agreement (Rynhold, 2008). The success of the Road Map was dependent on Palestinian's fulfillment of their security obligations. Thus, Palestinians were responsible for advancing any peace process. Furthermore, Johnson (2010) argues that Bush was unwilling to address the underlying reason behind the Palestinian violence which was the Israeli occupation (Johnosn, 2010). The Road Map for Peace failed to move peacemaking forward. Instead, it helped Israel in maintaining the status-quo of no negotiations in the Occupied Territories.

The Bush administration has done little to help the creation of a Palestinian state. Israel failed to meet its Road Map obligations. In order to freeze the peace process, Israel withdrew unilaterally from Gaza Strip in 2004. As Myre (2004) argues, Israel's unilateral disengagement from Gaza was intended to put the creation of an independent Palestinian state on indefinite hold (Myre, 2004). Furthermore, Israel was still establishing the Apartheid Wall which was first authorized in June 2002. This wall was an obstacle to Palestinian movement because it was constructed on large areas of Palestinian lands in the West Bank and thus cut off Palestinians from their communities and families. The apartheid wall made the humanitarian situation even worse in the Occupied Territories. Hilal (2007) argues, this development made the creation of a Palestinian state almost impossible because the Apartheid Wall was constructed on the territories where the Palestinian state would be created as called in the Road Map for Peace (Hilal, 2007). On July 25, 2003 President Bush criticized Israel's apartheid wall and considered it a problem because it "makes it very difficult to develop confidence between the Palestinians and Israel." (Kessler, 2003).

In order to appear as an honest broker between Palestinians and Israelis, the US threatened to cut aid to Israel. Weisman (2003) argues that Bush's disapproval of the apartheid wall was reflected in reducing bilateral assistance to Israel. The Bush administration looked for ways to press Israel to stop construction of Apartheid Wall that separates between the Israelis and Palestinians. As a result of wall construction, the Bush administration studied the possibility of cutting \$9 billion in loan guarantees for Israel that were approved by Congress. This pressure from Washington was due to the negative impact of Apartheid Wall on the Palestinian land and on the prospects for peace, or more importantly, stability. The wall started to take over Palestinian land, and cut Palestinians off from their homes, farms and schools. Furthermore, the wall would threaten the Road Map to Peace (Weisman, 2003).

This chapter has attempted to analyze the reasons behind the Bush administration's decision to offer recognition to an independent Palestinian state. First, this US foreign policy was implemented from a realistic approach. Following the 9/11 attacks, US policymakers decided to safeguard American national interests in the Middle East by seeking stability by re-balancing its relations between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The Bush administration changed its "hands-off" policy towards the conflict and sought to launch a major initiative. The US decided to seek to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict primarily to gain Arab support for the war against terrorism. The conflict posed a serious threat to American national interests, through fueling anti-American Islamic terrorism and extremism in the region at a very fluid moment. For the first time in US history, the US backed the creation of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. The US aimed to change the status-quo to promote regional stability and security. Second, the US linked regional stability to local "democratic" reforms. The Bush administration called for the establishment of a Palestinian state with provisional borders and democratic leadership

not compromised by terror. The replacement of Arafat was a precondition to the creation of a Palestinian state. The two-state solution would never happen with Arafat. By doing so, Bush challenged the Israeli claim that Palestinians failed to find their Nelson Mandela. The Bush administration backed the Road Map for Peace in order to reaffirm the two-state solution. However, Bush's backing for Israel's aggressive actions, helped it in maintaining the status-quo of no negotiations and promote the "facts on the grounds" in the Occupied Territories. Thus, while the recognition of the Palestinian state appears to be a remarkable and unprecedented concession, adopting a realist worldview helps us to see that it was primarily aimed to cement American interests in the region, albeit in new ways. It is fundamentally important to recognize that stability and not justice was the overreaching motivation for the Bush administration's move. Indeed, one can interpret the initiative as primarily a counter-terrorism strategy. Regionally, the move was intended to reduce anti-Americanism among Arab countries and peoples. Within the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the move was offered only as an explicit quid pro quo, that the Palestinians replace Arafat as their leader. While framed as pro-democracy, this demand was clearly an anti-democratic imposition, again aimed primarily to reduce the role of a leadership team that the Bush administration perceived as too militant if not actually as terrorist-based.

CONCLUSION

The American foreign policy towards Palestine after 9/11 was implemented from a realistic approach. The US was not serious about resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but managing the conflict in a way that safeguarded its national interests in the Middle East. President Bush used his initiatives to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to pass his violent plans in the Middle East. Bush decided to recognize the Palestinian state, for the first time in US history to gain Arab support for the war against terrorism. The US interfered in Palestinian domestic politics through asking the Palestinians to make certain reforms, remove President Yasser Arafat, and denounce terrorism, as both the US and Israel regard the resistance of the Israeli occupation as terrorism. These were pre-conditions if the Palestinians wanted to achieve their independent state. These reforms aimed to weaken Arafat and increase the power of the newly created post of Prime Minister. It is fundamentally important to recognize that stability and not justice was the overreaching motivation for the Bush administration's move. Indeed, one can interpret the initiative as primarily a counter-terrorism strategy. Regionally, the move was intended to reduce anti-Americanism among Arab countries and peoples. On the other hand, US-Israeli relations grew closer after the 9/11 attacks. The US renewed support for Israel to promote regional stability and safeguard American interests. The Bush administration supported Israel on the expense of the Palestinians. The success of the Road Map was dependent on Palestinian's fulfillment of their security obligations. On the other hand, the Bush administration was unwilling to implement the Road Map principles. Bush did nothing to ensure the implementation of the Road Map principles by Israel. That was due to Bush's misunderstanding of the issues involved, his inability to pressure Sharon to freeze the construction of settlements, and domestic political pressure from pro-Israel officials. The US succeeded in giving Israel enough time to

impose the “facts on the ground and thus maintaining the status-quo of no negotiations in the Occupied Territories.” Thus, the US was never an honest and neutral broker between Palestinians and Israelis.

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